COMMON SENSE IN POLITICS

JOB E. HEDGES

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BY

JOB E. HEDGES

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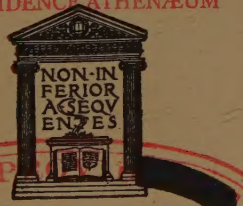
collection of the
PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM



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DEDICATED

TO THE MAN WHO DOES

THE BEST HE CAN, AT ALL TIMES,

WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

AND REGARDLESS OF APPLAUSE

THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK

COMMON SENSE IN POLITICS

I

THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK

More nonsense has been written and orated on the subject of American politics during the past ten years than in any decade of the nation's history. In spite of this, much progress has been made. Important legislation has been effected, rights protected, remedies established, and a general betterment brought about. While these results were being accomplished the country has been treated to the most remarkable outpouring of heated discussion, denunciation, and discrediting of motives that has ever been indulged in in so short a time.

This volume is not intended as the last word on any of the topics contained between its covers. The writer or speaker who claims to have presented the last word on any sub-

ject should not be permitted to write or speak again. Such a claim implies so advanced a case of egoism that it is an affront to intellect. By implication it even invades the domain of Providence and assumes a finality of wisdom which is hypocritical and astounding.

Eliminating the claim for final judgment, it is, however, a benefit to have all political questions continually discussed by as many persons as may be; for such discussion provokes thought, resultant thinking leads to community of ideas, and that community of ideas represents the composite of American life. If the mind and conscience of the entire nation or of a state are not actively brought to bear on all public questions, the body politic is not performing its full function. It is as if a portion of the human body had become paralyzed from misuse or disuse and the remaining parts kept up the appearance of normal action.

Within the limitations of constitutions, statutes and judicial decisions, the expressed will of the majority is, or becomes, the law of the land and, therefore, the standard of political conduct until changed by further legislative enactment. In this interim there is a constant discussion of ways and means

for progress. The careful study of conditions and the thoroughness of that discussion is the test of the degree of progress attained. Less harm arises from illogical deductions drawn from actual facts than from logical deductions drawn from assumed facts that are not true. The former will right themselves in time; the latter serve only as a rhetorical relief and can never result in a condition of permanency. The first is practice, the second is theory. The attitude of mind is quite as important in discussion as the conclusions sought to be established.

Any man in this country has a perfect right to his own conclusions. Such right comes directly from his actual devotion in principle and conduct toward his fellow-man, individually or in community, and not from his own personally admitted virtues. The main purpose of this volume is to attempt to change the public point of view while subjects of general import are under discussion, and to protest against that hypocrisy of view, argument, and conduct which has of recent years crept into public affairs. It is not sought to establish any particular theory, or to destroy any maintained theory. There is no intent to reflect on any individual, directly or by innuendo, but rather to look at

conditions, men and human nature as they are, leaving the result to the good judgment and conclusions of the people themselves.

To anticipate possible comment and, so to speak, give rebuttal in advance, the author has no spleen to vent, no broken word to punish, no unsatisfied ambition to vindicate, no axe to grind for use or display, no personal end to accomplish. The author hates hypocrisy, selfishness and vanity in high or low place, in officialdom or without it, and believes that most of the troubles charged to the nation are directly traceable to those characteristics in individuals.

It is a tremendous responsibility for any human being to say to another that that other is morally wrong. This implies a right of final judgment on morals which is not only unauthorized, but presumptuous in the last degree. For one person to say that the conclusions of another are erroneous because deductions are not logically drawn, or that they have been drawn from false premises, or that some essential element has been left out of the problem, all these are proper forms of discussion and tend to lead to a common judgment. Believing this, the author cannot consistently, and would not voluntarily at-

tempt to state that anyone else is morally wrong on any subject. He is willing to state that anyone is morally wrong, however, who believes that all who differ with him are morally wrong. The assertion of the possession of virtue does not prove it, nor does the charge of immorality in another prove itself without evidence. Logic is a valuable and desirable process for the mind, but when human life is reduced to logic and the element of human nature, human frailties, human sentiments are eliminated, the conclusion is apt to be as useless to the person who draws it as to the person upon whom it is sought to be imposed. A syllogism can never take the place of a human heart beat. There is, therefore, no use in discussing human actions, real or desired, if from the discussion there are eliminated the actual, normal, everyday characteristics of life which govern men in their relationship to each other. It may be that many motives of men are not what they should be. It may well be that men have different standards morally and intellectually. Living, however, with the guidance and restriction of law, that man is the best aid to the community who keeps his ear close to the human heart, counts its beats, lives within the knowledge of human frailties,

appreciates them, and endeavors to alleviate them by personal conduct as well as by didactic methods.

It would not have been inconsistent to have entitled this small volume "Political Psychology." It is not the purpose of the writer to indulge in didactics or polemics, but merely to describe things as they are in a particular field of activity, and by that description arouse a different attitude of mind, so that more normal conclusions may be reached.

It is a waste of time to enact laws to govern the conduct of men if these laws are based on the assumption that the men to be affected are what they ought to be rather than what they are. The wisest plan is to study human nature as it exists, to endeavor to uplift it, to legislate for actual conditions, and not to put upon the statute books any law which does not reflect the real consensus of public opinion. Any other course results only in the exploitation of the advocates of the measure and, later, in its infraction, which harms the public.

During the mediæval ages and the period following the Reformation thousands of persons were put to death because charged with practicing magic and witchcraft. It was held that anyone who indulged in such practices

violated the law of God and man. A belief in witchcraft and magic was prevalent in the public mind. Prosecution did not diminish the alleged practice nor lessen the belief. Putting to death merely accentuated the whole situation. The thundering of the pulpit, Catholic and Protestant, and the combined efforts of civil authorities were impotent to prevent these practices. They only ceased when a few wise men stated flatfootedly that there was no such thing as practicing magic or witchcraft, because there was no such thing as magic or witchcraft. And then it was all over. It was thus discovered that the mistake was in prosecuting men who were acting under a misconception, and in admitting that they did that which as a matter of fact they could not do, and then punishing them for it. Some of the tendencies in modern legislation bear a strong resemblance to mediæval methods.

The Constitution of the United States has been interpreted down to a comma, as have the constitutions of all the states. Our theory of government has been analyzed, dissected, and offered to the public as a political clinic. The realms of rhetoric and logic have been invaded and their choicest products offered to the general public quite as much

for the purpose of the resultant applause of the author as for the benefit of the public itself. Leading statesmen wonder why it is that other people do not all agree with them, and have felt sorrow for the other people because they did not see the light. They have simply overlooked one point and that the only one of any value—human nature. The actual fact is that the system of government formed here after centuries of previous experience is destined to stand.

It is possible from an airship to see human beings standing on the earth. It is natural for the person in the airship to expect the admiration of the person on the earth. But if the man in the airship expects to induce the man standing on terra firma to agree to a certain course of conduct affecting them both, it is desirable to have the airship come to earth and its occupant at least indulge in conversation with the other man. There is little use in preaching to an uncouth person without means that cleanliness is next to godliness. The most practical plan is to find out if such person really is without means, then preach the doctrine to him, at the same time giving him the price of a bath. When a person is suffering the pangs of hunger it is better to give him food than to describe

the troubles consequent upon indigestion. It is absolutely devastating to human reason to preach the doctrine of prohibition when the preacher's breath is redolent with the odor of whiskey.

Political aphorisms minus conduct are merely intellectual exercise. To do the best one can and then advise others to do the best they can is consistent, logical, human. It apparently seems necessary for those in high authority to declare continuously what is right and what is wrong in political conduct. There is no objection to this if it is for the purpose only of forcing people to think upon these topics. When, however, it is assumed that an oath of office is the line of demarcation between intelligence and ignorance, political righteousness and political unrighteousness, such an assumption is pathetic. If the condition of enlistment in the service of the State is that the enlisted man shall always wear the parade uniform of an officer and be within the hearing of the band and be the first and only recipient of applause, the value of such enlistment to the State is not worth the paper on which the application is made.

The hope of these pages is to dispel some silly ideas of general acceptance, the discus-

sion of which has been fruitful only in rhetorical results. It is better far to lead a life of virtue and influence without public discovery than to be unexpectedly discovered and be continuously nervous lest the public learn of conscious defects. It is better for a man to be what he claims to be than to have people think he is what he is not.

Under actual political conditions to-day there is a wide abyss between the knowledge of facts possessed by the occupant of public office and by the unofficial citizen. The visible standards of consistency of the public official who claims to be a teacher cannot be accurately judged by the average man. While charges of inconsistency, maladministration and graft are occupying public attention, it may be pertinent to remark that the political crime of the present decade is not larceny but hypocrisy.

This intendedly modest volume frankly admits the continuing force of the Ten Commandments, and that the Constitution of the United States and of each separate state divides the government into three parts, executive, legislative, and judicial. Without the slightest inclination toward irreverence, it is not necessary to rediscover the Ten Com-

mandments, and it is safe to assume by this time that people generally are sufficiently informed of the fact that there are three elemental parts to our system of government.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

II

THE STATE OF THE NATION

The life of the nation is not in peril of immediate dissolution.

Its political and moral health is liable at all times to be exposed to the contagion of corruption, evils in legislation, civic indifference, financial panic, contentions of selfish interests, unnecessary strife between labor and capital, revolts against established authority, socialistic upheavals, and temporary relaxations of strict standards of morals in political and social life. Whatever may be the cause, and whether chargeable to inherent defects in our theory of government, many of these conditions have afflicted the body politic within recent memory. Doubtless none of these is entirely due to any one particular cause. They are a result of a variety of causes, and each student of affairs is apt to ascribe these conditions to that particular cause nearest to his individual experience. Without reference to any specific question at issue, one

reason rests in the fact of the great difficulty, if not impossibility, of having all the people of the entire country think upon the same subject at the same time. The geographical extent of the country permits of the widest difference in physical and climatic conditions. This necessarily causes equally great differences socially and commercially. In Europe there are contiguous nations, with differences in language and habits, which present types no more strongly differentiated than those to be found in the various states of the United States. In the states where these differences appear, legislation is passed which meets the requirements of those particular localities. For instance, in a mining state in the West there is an entirely different plan of legislation from that which prevails in a manufacturing Eastern state. These local laws tend to create different political conditions.

The number of Federal questions of recent years have been reasonably limited and confined to the tariff, finance, internal improvements, foreign relations, and such typical topics. The expansion of business, by its increasing size forced into the form of corporations and extending from each state into almost every other

state, has emphasized the necessity for exercising Federal authority under the Constitution in the matter of inter-state commerce. That authority was always in the Constitution, but the great necessity for its exercise has been of recent years. Commercial development has affected social conditions; large fortunes have accentuated social differences. So many new situations in life have been established through the development of the country that there is a continuous cry for legislation to straighten out inequalities. Many of these inequalities would straighten themselves out if left to the evolution of experience. Others are frequently of a temporary nature and would pass away of themselves in the course of time. State legislatures are overworked and the demand for law has spread to the national capital. The conditions described above resulting from the neglect of the plainest laws of political hygiene are no more astonishing than the result of ill-health consequent upon a violation of the plainest rules for the care of the human body. The analogy is not exact, but serves the purpose of illustration. The results, in a measure, are the same, because there is always the civic doctor with quack medicines guaranteeing an immediate cure,

as there is the physician who can remedy a bodily ill by a patent nostrum with which his own name is intimately associated. Pneumonia was a disease much more to be dreaded in years past, before the advance of science, than it is now, when, if treated in time, it can by medical skill be freed from fatal results. The advance of science, however, does not justify carelessness in habits nor warrant exposure. The prosaic and somewhat uncomfortable and old-fashioned habit of wearing rubbers to prevent catching cold, while annoying, may prevent the necessity of recourse to advanced science and save life without the expense of professional care. In legislation less exposure and more care would accomplish the same result. It takes but casual observation to discover from the public prints, the platform declarations of political parties and the opinions of political leaders that the nation, or a state, as the case may be, is in greatest danger during and immediately preceding a political campaign. A well-organized imagination, supplementing facts and working overtime, causes its possessor to see not only many things that are, but more that are not. During the time of warmest discussion at the periods mentioned the Republic is usually hung over the brink

of the abyss of despair. The candidate, with his accompanying galaxy of political orators, is absolutely positive that the only way to prevent the nation from falling into the abyss is to permit his party, led by himself, to retain or be given a firm hold, so that he can draw it back and place it in a position of safety upon the banks of the Constitution. Such is the essence of the opposition argument. There is added to this the charge that the administration party since the last campaign has dealt foul blows to the Constitution, and that that sacred institution is in the throes of agony. The administration argument differs in shade and not in color. It announces with equal positiveness that, having conducted the government during a period of time without unsuccessful foreign war or prolonged domestic disturbances it is better qualified than the opposition to continue its administration by virtue of exclusive intelligence and practical experience. Somewhere between these extremes is a region of common sense. In any event, it is a matter of unchanging observation that the nation is always saved at the conclusion of a national campaign.

What the contending parties really mean is, that they view the questions at issue as

very serious, and an intense form of expression is used to fix the attention of the voters. There is some excuse for this method of procedure, because only once in four years is the entire country engaged in discussing national questions nationally. During the intervening time it discusses national questions in the light of their effect on particular localities. It is impossible to overestimate the value to the nation of a presidential campaign. The fact that it somewhat temporarily interferes with speculative business and causes doubt as to the policy of the next administration weighs not at all in the scale against education.

There is not the slightest excuse for being pessimistic about American government. There is every reason at all times to be solicitous, interested, and desirous to improve existing conditions. The real safety of the Republic is in that calm judgment by plain-minded men, who, after hearing and reading the speakers and writers on both sides, form their conclusions in accordance with what they feel is best. Error in judgment on the part of a voter is more apt to occur when the only attention he gives to public events is during the heated time between nominations and elections.

These suggestions are not intended to furnish the slightest excuse for pessimism. No one should be a pessimist who can read, write, and remember. The intellect incapable of appreciating that men and governments are better than they were, and are becoming better daily, is suffering from the vanity of introspection.

On the other hand, optimism unaccompanied by personal effort, is merely a state of mind and not fruitful.

American citizenship rises to its greatest height during war or threats of war. The nation is then civically at its best. This may be accepted as a fact already demonstrated. It stands in great contrast to the indifference of many citizens to the country's welfare in time of peace. It would be a rare condition which would enable the President and Congress to lead the American people into a war of aggression and conquest. Up to a certain point the people might follow, and then the policy of the administration, except in the case of a national insult that even a child would resent, would be reversed at the polls. On the defensive the nation would go to any point of sacrifice. It does not follow that, as a matter of common sense, we should not be prepared for war, but we should not com-

pete as a matter of pride in army and navy equipment with other nations between which conditions are entirely different than they are relative to us or we to them.

The most threatening danger to the stability of the Republic is from within, in times of peace, and predicated on its vast population and varied interests, distracting attention from government and making united action difficult. The fundamental force and cohesive strength of our constitutions and laws, powerful as they may be, are not more powerful than a common sentiment running through the entire body politic. As the nation increases in population and with the intense occupation of people with their own affairs, and the lack of opportunity for association one with another, cohesion in sentiment will be increasingly difficult. The problem will still be to get all the people to think about the same subject at the same time. That statesman is the greatest who can effect this. His further greatness will be demonstrated by allowing the people to come to their own conclusions without insisting that he be followed in some exclusive line of reasoning. If in addition to arousing the public mind to thought upon any particular subject he draws the conclusion that his view is the

only view in which safety lies, this makes two divisions of the public mind; one his own, and the other all the rest together. The majority would be entitled to rule. It sometimes happens that one man knows more than two or three men know; it has frequently happened that a single man was wiser than a score or a hundred men. It has never yet happened that any one man knew more than all the rest put together. Therefore, if any statesman assumes that he is infallibly right and all the rest entirely wrong, it forces the conclusion that the average intelligence of the rest is at lowest ebb.

Instead of being solicitous as to the stability of the government, the average citizen takes that stability for granted, if one can judge from the fact that such citizen participates so little in any of its functions. It is frequently charged that the American people are ephemeral, emotional, and spasmodic. This may be true in our dealings with each other, but not in our dealings with other nations. In the latter case judgment is more deliberate and sounder. In any case it must be considered sound politically if it represents the expressed will of an actual majority of those who have a right to express a political opinion.

In the time preceding the Spanish War the imminence of that contest was appreciated by a small fraction of the American people. Had the majority of the citizens of the United States appreciated the absolute unpreparedness of their own government for any kind of a conflict with another nation, even with one of the limited fighting force of Spain, their indignation would have turned from Spain against their own administration. They would have been unmindful of the fact that their own indifference to great questions had left the government in that very condition of unpreparedness.

After war was declared interest was aroused gradually, although it was only intense along the coast frontage. In New York City, in places of amusement the entertainment was opened by the orchestra playing "America," the audience standing; and later the audience was dismissed to the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner." Within a week after the close of the war, ragtime was substituted for the national airs and the war was forgotten except in the public prints and in the halls of the national legislature. On the return of the victorious American sailors to the port of New York, they were without ceremony given freedom of the city and vol-

untary entertainment furnished them. In many instances they were not allowed even to pay for food and libation, and yet within a month of that time the writer overheard two sailors who had apparently overstayed their shore leave, ask a person on Broadway the direction of the Battery so that they could get to Staten Island and reach their vessels, and they were told to go north. They were intentionally misdirected.

In a way, agitation, discussion, differences of opinion, different views of national policies, state administration and city governments, are the life of the Republic. When those are conducted along the lines of common sense and calm judgment, they are healthful and advantageous. When they are instigated for the purpose of individual exploitation and party advancement, and advertisement consequent upon publicity, they mark hypocrisy, they indicate the reign of individualism against the welfare of the nation, and, like an epidemic, cause unnecessary harm and an undesirable strain on the nerves and the body of the government.

There is a difference between agitation and discussion as great as the difference between day and night. While the nation may suffer in times of panic and financial distress, poor

crops and unwise legislation, it may also suffer from times of too great plenty, from times of over-development, resulting in forgetfulness of the fact that each man owes a duty to all the rest and that the concentrated and exclusive pursuit of individual enterprise, regardless of community of interest, is harmful to a marked degree.

That the Constitution of the United States was a divinely appointed instrument no thoughtful man will deny. It has always seemed to the writer, however, that the special manifestation of Providence surrounding that instrument was in bringing the people by the evolution of experience through trial and bloodshed to that particular moment where it furnished an attitude of mind which made it possible for the founders of the government to draft that instrument along broad lines of general conduct, so general that they express in a way the progress of the human race up to that time and prescribe the limitations within which men could best live and act. It is a comment on the frailty of human nature, however, that after the instrument was adopted by the various states, the selection of the District of Columbia as the seat of the national capital was arrived at by a compromise,

which alone secured votes necessary for the adoption of Hamilton's financial plans regarding the national indebtedness.

There was no period prior to the time of the drafting of the Constitution, or has there been at any time since, when that Constitution could have been adopted had it been deferred until the states, or rather the colonies, had progressed a few years until they occupied the relative positions of commercial and other supremacy that they do now. The petty egotism of individuals would have prevented agreement on the broad principles adopted and the Constitution would then have been a mere adjustment and compromise along lines of relative importance.

If our Constitution had grown out of the single conflict of the Revolution, it would never have lasted, nor would there be the present union of states that there is. The fact is that that contest was the final step in an evolution of human experience that had progressed through hundreds of years. There is nothing new in saying this, and it is not suggested for the purpose of adding to historical deduction.

The ability of man to govern himself, the principles of political democracy, of a republican form of government, can be ac-

cepted as a fact. What particular form and variation we may make, what temporary modification, what occasional retarding of progress there may be, are merely elements that emphasize existing conditions and force the conclusion that the best asset of the country, outside of its laws, if not quite equal to them, is a continually observing public, keen to its own frailties, appreciative of its obligations, and with the consciousness that no single man has done his full duty until he has done everything he can.

It is not sufficient for a man to say that he is mathematically but a certain portion of the United States and therefore not called upon for a degree of service beyond his mathematical share. This reduces him at once to an algebraic "X." In the practical problems of American life it would not be flattering for the real value of X to be discovered.

Legally, all forms of government in the United States are corporate. The Federal government is a corporation. So is that of the states, and so is that of the cities. Potentially, our political and social life is a partnership, in which each man has a share in its assets, and is liable in a measure for all its obligations. Political misconduct in

Portland, Maine, affects civic conditions in Portland, Oregon, or vice versa. A good administration and alertness to civic obligations evidenced in either one of those cities, for instance, helps the other; because, after all, under our form of government, it is the average of life that makes actual conditions.

With full respect for the well-worn and superlative adjectives and overworked rhetoric typical of our Fourth of July, there have been nations greater than the United States, because greatness is a matter of proportion and relationship. Viewed from this standpoint, we have been excelled in fighting strength, in commercial greatness, in institutional government, in arts and sciences. In the possibilities of individual development, the opportunity for each one to better himself, in the variety of activities available to those who are seeking to advantage themselves, in the multitude of conditions created by our mode of life, there has never been, and probably never will be, a scheme of government furnishing opportunities for individuality and self-betterment as marked as that under which we live. This is an element of strength and an element of weakness. The accumulated momentum of success, with the potential advantage of specific opportunities

—education, mental and financial endowment —makes the race sometimes seem unequal. It is unfair, however, to make the comparison between the person of greatest opportunity and the one of least, when the proper test is between those of relatively the same immediate social and moral environment. We must not charge government with the responsibility for innate differences between men.

With the marvelous mixture of social and racial conditions in this country, the real problem is to create a mode of life by wise legislation, which shall restrict the vicious, protect the weak, but make everyone understand that his preferment depends primarily and finally upon his individual effort. The greater the opportunity, the greater the talent, the greater the obligation, political as well as moral, from the more fortunate to the less fortunate. It is not a question of political importance at all what fortune an individual has succeeded in gaining. It is a matter of vital importance whether in gaining it he violated a legal or moral right of another. It is the height of silliness to say wisdom will not accomplish more than ignorance. It is absurd to argue that the momentum of progress established by judgment, good habits and persistent, con-

centrated effort shall halt and mark time until the less fortunate catches up. It is anarchy to decry possession without demonstrating that it was wrongfully obtained. It is hypocrisy and a moral crime to cater to ignorance and to destroy reasonably happy lives by persuading fairly contented minds that they should have what they never could have in the ordinary course of events, and that their lack of possession due to either a lack of effort or lack of talent is the result of a conspiracy framed by others.

Physical and social conditions vary so greatly through the nation that it is difficult, and naturally difficult, to have legislation that meets the average of human needs. It is a perfectly sound proposition to say that the government should not furnish special privileges to any class. It is as clear as the multiplication table that the law should not give to any one man what it does not give to another. It is equally clear that those laws, however, are passed by men elected by other men with all human weaknesses, coming from different parts of the country, with different ambitions, and moved by the incentive of competition. Who, then, has the right finally to say what is special privilege? Each of the great parties, for instance, has

been accustomed for years in its national platform to decry special privilege and to charge its opponents with being the instigators of such awful practices. It is fiercely alleged that these parties grant these privileges to their own members, and that as a result of some secret understanding or improper inducement. The actual fact is that the special privileges sought from government and frequently obtained do not have their inception in a political doctrine, but in the desire of men or corporations, who, so far as this particular privilege is concerned, recognize no political differences of opinion beyond that of self-interest. This is clearly shown by the fact that boards of directors of corporations which are supposed to be enjoying special privileges are composed of men of different political beliefs, and stock control owned regardless of party affiliation.

This is not a new discovery, but merely shows how far some popular ideas are from the facts. In the final analysis the question of party politics has as little to do with it as the number of stars in the Milky Way has to do with the price of milk. The desire to accumulate wealth will always exist. The method of procuring it by means of government aid will always depend upon the degree of political

obligation which the seeker of such assistance recognizes toward the state or nation.

Personality will always outweigh its opposite; capacity will always outstrip incapacity; intelligence will outweigh ignorance. The mind operates nowise differently in political circles than in commercial circles when the question at issue is solely self-interest.

When a group of men with a desire to benefit themselves decide in some conference that they are going to seek privilege, either Federal, state or municipal, they agree upon a plan to have that privilege granted. Those of the particular group who happen to be best acquainted and nearest in touch with the party which is in power in the particular jurisdiction are the ones who take the initiative and ask for that privilege under a general argument for the benefit of everybody, and insist on it by virtue of their association with the party in power. The same group, asking the same privilege from another state, will use different men from their own number to go to the front and ask the passage of an act, and so they ask for it by virtue of their service and association with the opposite party. There is nothing startling or abnormal about this. It does not represent any giant conspiracy against the

Republic or the state. It represents people trying to provide the means of accumulation more rapidly than they otherwise would be acquired, and forgetting the fact that they owe a moral and civic duty to every other portion of the community, which is violated if that particular privilege interferes with the fundamental rights of somebody else.

The only remedy is the continual preparedness of everyone to insist on all his legal rights and his alertness to discover at once a threatened danger and prevent it, whether by discussion through the ordinary channels of publicity, or by direct appeals to members of the legislative body and the executive intrusted with the power of veto.

The practical difficulty is that the men who seek the privilege are organized and have acquired headway in the race, as a rule, before their activities become a matter of public notice. This situation is the direct result of our institutions. It is a source of weakness and it is a source of strength, and will never be adjusted to a final absolute standard of exact justice as long as human beings are the instruments which other human beings must use to accomplish their desires. It is a question of standards. It is a problem that can be and will be solved with relative

success if it is looked at in a common sense way and conditions are recognized as they are.

It frequently happens that one group or class of citizens is entirely willing that another group should have a privilege undisturbed if they can have their own undisturbed, and in that case legislation becomes a mere matter of squaring of interests and trading of benefit for benefit. This, too, will continue to a greater or less extent until the moment of final translation, and certainly as long as it is expected that human conduct can be finally regulated and standardized by statute, apart from the spirit and practice of moral and political responsibility between men.

Government is a thing to live under, not on. It is a mere excuse by virtue of which by putting certain conditions on paper we state that there are certain things that men shall do, and certain other things that they shall not do in their relationship towards each other. The more general the proposition, the more advantageous. The more specific it is, the more liability there is that harm will result.

There is much truth in the declaration that the country is going through a spasm of

over-production in law. The fact that many laws passed as a remedy fail in large measure in their purpose is due to the initial fact that the community, as a community, is not sufficiently apprised of the evil which it is sought to remedy, and that they are forced into the lawbooks under the pressure of a temporary emergency which may of itself never recur.

With the desirability of having a law represent the active mentality and morality of the large majority of the citizens, and the difficulty of effecting that result by virtue of the fact that many are too engrossed to have either the time or understanding to grasp a particular problem, men are accustomed to rely on the personality of individuals who are advocating or opposing particular plans for remedial legislation. One effect of this has been that in the past few years, with a tendency to hero worship at the same time, people have been more inclined to follow this or that individual than to advocate or oppose this or that measure.

Legislation has frequently become a means of attracting attention to the individual who proposed it, and applause has been given or withheld from him as an individual in his admitted struggle, more frequently than

energy has been given to grasp the merits of a particular measure under discussion.

It is only common sense to say, therefore, that many men, with the stimulus of applause, and with the pleasure of being in the public eye, from time to time advocate measures and carry them through as a means of contest and self-exploitation. This is not strange, abnormal, or monstrous. It is merely an evidence of one weakness of mankind. It is not remarkable that any man prominent in affairs, whether in official life or otherwise, should come to feel in the heat of contest that his thought should be another man's conviction. When such a person arrives at such a state of mind he unconsciously, and it may be beyond all intention, creates conditions and effects results that do not always prove of lasting benefit, because the problem has come to be a personal one, rather than a general one.

From the original theory of opportunities for individual advancement in this country and the difficulty of conveying an idea to the popular mind, and the fact that it is easier to discuss a man than a measure, the personal equation has been accentuated to a point far beyond the conception of the

Fathers. Even this is not a final danger, nor is it remediless. The very illustration it gives of the possibilities of personal influence is an invitation to others to enter the contest and to dedicate themselves to the service of their fellow-man, even though without invitation from that fellow-man, and oftentimes without his desiring it. There is no element, human or otherwise, which cannot be properly used and beneficially, that if ill used may not become harmful in the extreme. Heat is essential to life; its wrong application destroys life.

Theoretically, the people as a whole take the initiative in all public matters. Practically, the initiative is taken by individuals or small groups, and the general public then appealed to for approval. The proposed action may redound to public advantage. It may be to the advantage only of the individual. It sometimes happens that it is of advantage to all concerned.

The responsibility in all matters affecting the public interest rests primarily upon individuals who have the best opportunities of ascertaining facts and who are in a position to exercise great influence. This responsibility can neither be dodged, avoided, or explained away. Whether it is inherently

selfish, or only relatively so, depends upon circumstances.

The man who does not vote is not entitled to an opinion on affairs which he might have affected had he voted. The man who has never made an effort to correct a condition is entitled to no grievance on account of the position in which he finds himself. The anomalous condition in American political life is that human beings expect results more than human from the human instruments they are compelled to employ. It is not possible for an individual to familiarize himself, for instance, with every bill pending before a legislature and inform his representative as to his desires regarding it. There would be no time for him to do that and pursue his ordinary vocation. He can, however, keep track of many matters, and by expressing his opinion to his official representative, or even by conversation with neighbors, create a sentiment which would make his representative hesitate before taking a final position without knowing that he did represent the average of his constituents.

The nation is not in need of great geniuses, whose activities shall be accepted as final for the multitude, although even geniuses have their use. They have the ability to suggest

new matters. They have creative ideas. One of the difficulties pertinent to genius is that it has so few mental associates that it is apt to look upon the rest of the race as inferior. Some great musicians have been so entirely engrossed and preoccupied that they have not allowed themselves time to observe many of the conventions of life, with the result that their hair has grown longer than the length recognized as proper in the community. Sometimes persons of moderate musical capacity, seeking the applause accorded genius, imitate the length of its hair in their own, in the hope that they will have the same applause. So it is with the passion to be in the full light of publicity. Seeing in some great emergency that a particular statesman has touched the popular chord and has expressed himself in a popular manner, they formulate some plan of action and then look for the line of discussion which will put them in the position before the public that the more learned man occupied, regardless of whether the public needs the proposed reform or can appreciate the discussion. Vociferation does not make an orator any more than long hair makes a musician.

Nothing is more humorous than to see men with second-rate minds servilely following a

real leader of thought, to give the impression of their own independent ratiocination. Self-imposed intellectual servitude should provoke laughter, not applause. Admitted intellectual superiority in another, with no claim for more than one has, is honest.

These comments are offered because the conduct of public men often displays characteristics from which the only deduction is that no one else knows anything. It is unnecessary to repeat even the aphorism of Lincoln on that subject. More good is accomplished by a man who is not certain he is right but thinks he is and does the best he can, than by a man who assumes that everyone else errs and, therefore, he must be right. More harm is done by discussing remedies for political diseases, without persuading people to agree first that there is a necessity for a remedy, than sometimes comes from the disease itself. It could readily happen that a particular kind of an assault committed, which was not covered by the Penal Code, had shocked and outraged the public. It could equally readily happen that persons desiring to prevent such a condition in the future should at once enter into a discussion as to the penalty. One man could urge forty years as a proper punish-

ment, another twenty. The first one could say that such an outrageous crime could only be properly punished by forty years of imprisonment. The other could admit this academically, but contend, with a degree of punishment so great, it would be more difficult to get convictions, and that the better course would be to prescribe a penalty of twenty years and take away the right of pardon.

Such discussion carried on, with the general public as jury, might fail of result and similar assaults be invited by the failure to agree upon a punishment. The tendency to leave public functions to individuals has, therefore, an advantageous and a disadvantageous side. Initiative thus usually taken by individuals, and left to them entirely, results often in the adoption of an individual view, rather than a composite conviction which represents the intelligent thought of an appreciable number of citizens.

It is quite easy to comment upon and criticise these particular characteristics or activities. It is difficult to prescribe a remedy. The main purpose of this discussion is to emphasize the fact that in the realm of politics, as in any other, common, ordinary, everyday sense should control conduct, and that people do not differ any more in politics, except from

the effect of applause on the mind and the pleasure of exercising power, than they do in any other walk of life.

There is not the slightest question of the ability of the American people to govern themselves or to decide important questions and decide them rightly; the difficulty is to arrive at conclusions without the admixture of partisan advocacy. It is a perfectly plain tendency in life not to decide matters or questions until under pressure of great necessity, or within the shadow of a threatening disaster. As a groundwork for the settlement of problems there is frequently stirred up an agitation so that the question under discussion will take the color of national import and of commanding influence. This does not create a wholesome condition, nor result in final benefit. The fact is the alleged perils may not be national at all, but merely matters of local inconvenience. When they do become actual perils, the people will meet them bravely and wisely.

Pending the decision, the nation may suffer great financial loss, and it may take much time for recuperation. This is a lesser evil in the long run, than premature, improperly digested legislation. Different interests, not national in their importance, while contend-

ing with each other, may bring about conditions which cause great temporary disadvantage resulting from that contention. It is a question of reaching the golden mean of common sense judgment. With the public mind not alert to public questions, individuals have a special opportunity of seeking their own advantage. Fortunately, there is an inherent resiliency in American temper, and the country is possessed of such vast wealth that it has so far quite readily overcome temporary setbacks.

There can be no final substitution of legislation for moral responsibility.

SOME AMERICANIZED TRAITS

III

SOME AMERICANIZED TRAITS

The author has entire respect for the wisdom of the Fathers. He recognizes that they were learned men, and feels deeply indebted to them for the rights they assured to the American people by the Constitution they framed and the sacrifices they made in their behalf. He feels indebted to their patriotism and their depth of learning. He does not believe that their utterances must be taken as a perpetual guide for all modern conditions of which they could not have had knowledge and which they could not even have imagined.

Intellectual life during Revolutionary days differed as much from present intellectual life as the rules of fractions differ from integral calculus. Commercial conditions were as simple then, compared with conditions now, as addition is compared with the binomial theorem. Many of the sciences were in their infancy, and many which contribute to-day to the luxuries and necessities of life

were then unknown. Transportation and the diffusion of knowledge have reached a point never conceived by the Fathers. During Washington's second administration he expressed confidence that the mails would some day be carried from Philadelphia to New York inside of twenty-four hours. He was laughed at by the people and ridiculed by the press for this prophecy. To-day the mail is carried from Jersey City to Philadelphia in ninety minutes. Had Jules Verne written at the time of the Revolution his imaginings would have been deemed to border on witchcraft. To-day his romancing has merged into realization. Trains run under rivers and through the earth; men fly through the air; messages are conveyed by electricity and are sent through the air without physical medium. The human voice can be heard over hundreds if not thousands of miles of distance, and whispers are easily distinguishable. Creature comforts have been multiplied, and what was a luxury a century ago is now discarded as of no use whatever.

The grand result of these and a myriad other circumstances is a fevered condition of mind, a passion of haste, desperate competition and accomplishment, adverse to delibera-

tion, preventive of calmness of judgment, and conducive to loss of perspective. Present characteristics are therefore not to be wondered at, but are to be accepted merely as complicating many of our problems. It is fair to let the Fathers rest peacefully in their graves and to take the responsibility for straightening out our own affairs.

In the political arena to-day there seems to be going on a contest novel and fierce. There are more combatants than are usually seen. So many, in fact, and so great the noise, that it is difficult for the spectators to see, hear, and always understand what actually is going on. Above the general noise, however, are frequently heard the words "graft," "bosses," "classes," "masses," "parties," "vice," "reform," and like words too numerous to mention. The major part of the people, to continue the simile, are sitting around the arena, some keenly observing, some leaning forward to get a more distinct look or more clearly to hear what is going on. Many are indifferent, and those in the rear rows applaud after those in the front rows start it. Occasionally a defeated contestant is carried out, or a victorious combatant permits himself to be carried around the ring on the shoulders of partisans whom

he has summoned for that purpose, modestly acknowledging that he is a victor.

What does it all mean, and why is it that from pulpit, press, and platform there is such excitement? It means, politically speaking, that within a few years hitherto unthought of questions have arisen, new opportunities been created. Men have increased in numbers until particular ideas, held formerly only by individuals, are now embraced by a thousand times as many people as formerly held them. It means that there has been an awakening of the public mind to conditions toward which it has heretofore remained indifferent, and that instead of having one or two engage in combat for the edification and entertainment of the rest, the combatants have increased, and the spectators are called upon more frequently to turn down the thumb of disapproval or to applaud success. Those in the arena and on the spectators' benches are just as human as they ever were before and have the same traits of character. The difficulty of knowing exactly what is the situation is increased by the dust and noise and the intensity of the conflict which is accentuated by cries and blows. The qualities of mind and heart which make for honesty are the same now as they

were a hundred years ago. The same motives and lack of morals, which made for dishonesty, are no different than they were a century since. The complications of life, social, commercial and political, simply furnish more opportunities for the disregard of the one or the practice of the other. To understand the requirements of the multitude is to first understand the disposition of the individual. We are primarily discussing the common sense of political life which appears under our particular form of government, where everything is magnified unduly by the publicity given to political affairs, and the effect on the mind resulting from political power and publicity. A man need not become entirely metamorphosed because he is part of a political movement. It does seem, however, that he sometimes loses his perspective and the coloring of the picture is so changed that relationships assume entirely different forms from those intended. If men's motives could always be accurately judged by their conduct, the problem of government would be much easier of solution. The spoken word, unfortunately, does not always proclaim the real purpose, nor does the overt act always indicate consistency in conduct. To ascertain just what are the facts of the

problem, just what conditions must be met and changed for the common good, is as difficult as the discovery of the proper remedy. Nevertheless, men in relatively the same sphere of life do not differ so much from each other as they sometimes think. If men actually knew what their neighbors thought of them there would be many a rude awakening. If neighbors actually told what they thought of one another, they would cease to be neighbors. If men could persuade their business associates to believe them as great as they persuade their families they are, they would hardly be recognized in business circles.

Only in the arena of politics is vituperation in this country carried to its greatest extent. There people seem to endeavor to prove their own virtue by decrying that of others. During campaigns things are said and done which at any other time would seem absolutely monstrous. And yet, in a measure, it is not without public benefit that opinions which are restrained during the rest of the year are expressed, and the mind is relieved to that extent. Nothing is so fatal to mental tranquillity as an unexpressed opinion. This does not mean that vituperation can wisely be carried on for the benefit

of an individual or a community without limit during campaigns or during the heat of political discussion at any other time. It does mean, however, that any man or party which expects to lead and influence public opinion and conduct the administration of affairs must expect to be criticised and commented upon by that very same public which such party or individual expects to lead. Politics are a desperately personal proposition.

It ought not to be, but it is a fact that a personality is more interesting than a proposition of conduct, and men will discuss an individual when they will not take the trouble carefully to discuss what that individual claims he stands for. So it is that the question is frequently asked, "Do you agree with the President or differ from him?" "Do you agree with the Governor or differ from him?" and men become friends or enemies of public officials without considering the principle advocated. It is not a question whether we agree with a President or a Governor. The proposition is whether that President or Governor is endeavoring to carry out policies with which the citizens agree or disagree, and not whether, as an individual, he should be given the meed of praise for

a conflict carried on against some of the very people whom he is expected to represent. The rewards of public approval are so flattering, and the homage paid to success so exhilarating to the mind, that the individual frequently considers himself a principle. His followers, therefore, divide the public between friends and enemies of a President, Governor, or Mayor.

In the City of New York some years since it was a part of the platform of one of the parties that candidates for the Assembly were pledged to carry out all the policies of the Governor then in office. It seemed not to occur to anyone that the men so elected were to take an oath before entering upon their office to obey the laws of the nation and state, and to perform their legislative functions according to their oath and their conscience. It is quite possible that they might have differed from the executive of the state as a matter of principle and without any moral turpitude. Yet in conversation and in the public prints, in the pulpit and upon the platform, members of the legislature who acted according to their convictions were denounced as traitors to the public good and without moral standard.

At the national Capitol the situation is

the same. If the press, individuals or circumstances have given rise to public discussion of a particular question, and the discussion hinges around the passage or non-passage of a proposed act of legislation, the measure seeming reasonably popular whether wise or not, and Congress does not act at once, regardless of many other duties, the President is called upon to force it to vote favorably upon that bill.

Even the Presidential use of patronage at that time is condoned, which at other moments would be condemned.

Every thinking man knows that the President's duty is done when he expresses his opinions in his messages to Congress. The fact remains, however, that the public is a desperately human entity, and if it is satisfied that the result to be accomplished is of general benefit, judged in the light of the moment and the particular stress it is under, it doesn't stop to consider ways and means, and gives its approval or disapproval of a President or a Governor, according to his success in forcing action by legislators who are bound by as sacred an oath of office as either a President or a Governor. One of the reasons for all this is that the affirmative of a proposition usually gets its argu-

ments started first, and before the merits or demerits of a particular measure are fully understood it is well under way in the public mind. That momentum being established, the conclusion is instantly drawn that anyone who opposes it is morally wrong. Take, on the other hand, a bill introduced after careful study only by the man who introduces it, and its general features or purposes not fully understood by the public at large; the fate of that bill depends largely on the first guess made by the public, with or without thought as to its merits. And if the public guesses "No," the introducer is not charged with lack of wisdom, but with lack of morals.

All this simply goes to bear out the illustration first used in this chapter. The common sense of it is a legislator or an executive is still a human being with ordinary everyday tendencies and temperament, and should be no different when in office than when out of it. Being clothed with authority, however, and his actions reflected through the tremendous light of public discussion, his importance is unduly magnified and the principles of human nature are for the moment overlooked. Threats do not convince; they may induce; and a law passed under pressure

and without calm personal discussion accomplishes no more for the body politic than food gulped and unmasticated does for the physical body. Vituperation and threats may change a condition, but they accomplish no permanent good result. The ability to analyze and explain results is rarer than the ability to merely understand. There is such a thing, however, as analyzing so closely that nothing practical is accomplished.

The situation will always remain the same, because human nature will always remain the same. To decide what a man of given mentality and morality ought to do, then wisely to discuss that, is an intellectual luxury. To find out and understand what men are, then to persuade them what they ought to be, think and do, and to move them to do it, is to benefit the human race. The trouble is, men want applause immediately. The moment they make an effort they turn toward the public for approval. They long to have that approval, whether it comes from the press or from the handclapping of the crowd. This is not unnatural; it is merely human. The greatest man is he who is willing to have the results of his principles and conduct receive approval only when they are worked out to their finality, even if that approval

come after he has left office or after his decease.

It is safe to say that few there are who do not instinctively desire to benefit themselves, though they may not know in just what manner this may best be accomplished, nor have the strength for such accomplishment. The more freedom of action they may have to work out individual betterment, the more apt is it to be worked out.

The United States claims to furnish the fullest and freest channel for individual improvement, and since its organization has stood with doors wide open inviting all who wished to enjoy its opportunities to enter. The invitation has been accepted eagerly, until to-day we have a civilization representing the globe in composite form and all under the guidance of a system of laws which at their inception could not have looked forward to present conditions. It was never within the imagination of the Fathers that the nation's limits would be what they now are, or that in variety and extent the nation's resources could possibly develop as they have, or have created conditions which, commercially, could have divided the people so widely in benefit. All this has raised unusual and intricate questions and demands the

very rarest judgment for their equitable solution.

That solution, however, will be best worked out through the domain of morals with the assistance of law, rather than with the edict of statute and the embellishment of morals. Law, in a way, stands as the arbiter between individual interests in competition and is presumed to insure rights and enforce obligations. Unfortunately for idealism people who are supposed to be directed and protected by law are the same people who are to make the law through their representatives, and without the final test of morals, laws are apt to work in a circle. Modern laws are supposed to be the antithesis of absolutism, and to substitute human rights in place of imperial favor. After centuries of force and that very imperialism written on every page of history, it is just as natural as ever for individuals to enjoy the adulation of the populace and to wish to influence conditions as before. It is a change in degree as well as kind and form and method and will be so to the end of time, whether in village or city, state or nation. It is human to desire potential influence and to participate in shaping events.

With these thoughts in mind, a solution of

many of our political questions is easier. Absolute democracy is an intellectual dream springing up in overheated logic, but results in a rude awakening when tested by experience. It is neither dangerous nor unpleasant to walk in sleep in a room where there is no furniture. Approximation is the best that can be expected from finite beings differing both mentally and morally. As long as there are human beings, there will be some who are seeking what they are not entitled to. There will always be some who follow the doctrine of expediency rather than fixed standards. There will always be some who will do things if they don't expect to be detected who would not do the same thing with a witness. Men do not forge if anyone is looking on. Men do not knowingly take marked bills if the taking is to be a proof of larceny.

The whole question finally resolves itself into whether each person recognizes a moral and legal obligation to all the others, as shown in his personal conduct toward them. One of the silliest doctrines preached is that questions can only be settled in this country by being kept out of politics. Outside of a man's duty to his Creator, there is hardly a question in the United States that can be

raised that is not a political question. The reason is that every law is the final result of the casting of a ballot. The enforcement of every law comes through a human being, and the selection of that human being is the result of the casting of a ballot by a human being. The laws of health, the enforcement of the Penal Code, the building of a house in which a man lives, the clothes he wears, the money with which he purchases, the services for which he is remunerated, all are affected by law and are only finally disposed of when actually cast into the hopper and ground out after public discussion.

Questions are settled by being taken to the people, not by being kept from them.

Whatever we may deem our rights and our obligations to be, someone will always have to be doing something for another. In each case, both profit by the experience. There is an unquestioned tendency to trust too much to legislation and too little to personal effort. The activities surrounding such legislation from the inception of the movement leading up to it, and the enforcement of it thereafter, embrace the whole range of political life in this country.

The words " politics " and " politicians " have come to have far other than their nat-

ural meanings, and are interpreted according to the stress on the public mind at the time and the strain of the effort to accomplish desired results under a system of government where all are at least supposed to have equal opportunities before the law. This is apart from the question of woman suffrage. Whatever may be the derivation and meaning of the word " politics," it practically signifies influencing the people in the aggregate without the use of force. A politician is one who is engaged in such an effort. It accomplishes nothing to cast slurs on the one or the other. It merely clouds the situation. Characterization of either should always be accompanied by qualifying adjectives according to the end sought and the methods employed either in politics or by politicians. If this were always done, half our political difficulties would be at an end. A statesman is merely a man accepted as more learned than a politician. Satire, ridicule, and denunciation of individuals merely on account of their political activities accomplish nothing more than giving mental relief to him using those particular forms of description.

The Constitution of the United States was founded upon the belief that all citizens

would be politically active at all times. In present-day discussions it has come about that to be politically active invites condemnation as a matter of course, and the reward of virtue is often placed upon the brow of a man because he has never taken part at all in politics, and therefore was necessarily without guile and possessed of virtue. Praise often comes to the man who calls the other man a liar first. Political character frequently is what we think the other man should have. Not to be interested and participate in civic affairs should be a badge of disgrace. The fact that public life and political activities furnish many opportunities for self-aggrandizement and aid in life's competition, has nothing to do with the question.

There should not be, but always will be, graft. Graft is not indigenous to public office, although it thrives there with particular fruitfulness. Graft is larceny by a man acting in a representative capacity. It exists in the degree in which the principal who employs the representative watches the conduct of his representative. When a principal believes his representative is virtuous because the latter claims he is, and the latter is not held up to his literal responsibility, graft increases.

When a man who has been politically active commits a crime, punish him for that crime and not for his activity. The fact of such crime and punishment is no excuse for anyone else to deny himself participation in politics which is clearly his own duty. If the minister of a congregation should be expelled from the pulpit for personal frailty, it would not justify a member of the congregation in giving up his religion. If the result of matrimony is incompatibility of temper, or the unlucky selection of a mother-in-law, it isn't necessary at once to violate the laws of God and man.

This nation represents, as near as may be, a workable democracy. Its laws are the means to an end. The progress of human society still depends upon the inculcation and practice of morality. It is not strange that laws instituted and enforced by human beings should be subject to the weaknesses of human judgment and conduct. Opportunity has much to do with determining conduct. As already stated, the desire for applause is natural, the desire for influence not abnormal, the seeking of public preferment and public office desperately human. The moral harm is doing any or all of these with a declaration that none of them is undertaken

under the impulse of any of those thoughts or temperamental conditions. The latter is mere hypocrisy. The former is at least honest. Men hold public office because they desire it. Alleged self-immolation upon the altar of office-holding is mere cant, nonsense, and egotism raised to the Nth power. There is no public office in the United States to-day that cannot be filled by another as well as by the present holder. Anyone who openly stated that he alone was best fitted for such position would become a laughing-stock. The best reforms that have been instituted in administration or in remedial statute have been the result of conflicts between the ambitions of honest-minded men. The greatest failures have arisen from the cant and hypocrisy of men who have not had the real courage to admit their natural characteristics. The most pathetic case is that of a man who thinks he is in himself a moral reform. The Almighty has never yet given an irrevocable power of attorney to a human being. How silly it is, therefore, not to recognize the limitations of human nature, instead of substituting individuals for principles. In times of war men rise to their proper stature. If men participated in politics, —the business of the nation,—in times

of peace with the same devotion they display in times of war, the life of the Republic would be one of continuous progress. Selfish interest, utterly apart from principle, commands this course. It is better to give selfishly than not to give at all. It is better to assist another for the purpose of being discovered in the act than to withhold all assistance. Someone will profit.

Political office properly opens the door of individual betterment in many ways. Many of the choicest prizes in professional and business life are awarded to those who have had experience in public office. Public office is often sought for that reason. This can be done without hypocrisy and without harm to the public if the individual while in office gives adequate service with entire honesty. Occupancy of executive and administrative positions furnishes more experience within a few years than individuals ordinarily get in half of or even an entire lifetime otherwise. For men to say that they hold public office only and exclusively and entirely for the public benefit is to fool themselves as well as the public. It accomplishes nothing to indulge in hypocritical criticism of public officials, except to lessen the respect of the public for their own represen-

tatives and to render their services less efficient.

This subject has been gone into at this length only because the public mind seems to be largely occupied with the administration of public office, and that too is as it should be. No occupant of a public office, however, should imagine that he is the public, for then he serves only himself. If the occupant of a public office feels overburdened in his service and that the sacrifice is too great, there is no prohibition in the Constitution or statute to prevent his resigning. Men, as a rule, are theoretically democratic by profession and desperately personal by instinct and practice.

When power and influence are sought merely for exhilaration and regardless of the rights of others, it is undemocratic and merits only condemnation. It takes judgment and common sense to decide along what lines particular men are acting. It will be much easier to come to a conclusion and to give the awards of approval, or to administer proper condemnation, if, in forming our judgment, we understand poor, plain human nature as it is.

There has never been so much discussion of public topics as now, with the exception

of the times immediately before and after the Revolution and surrounding the scenes of the Rebellion. It is sought here to make that discussion a public benefit by furnishing possibly a different point of view, even if that point of view is not adorned with metaphorical flowers and pictured with elaborate rhetorical finish.

Americans have such confidence in their present and in their future, and believe their institutions so much superior to those of other countries, that they are apt to indulge in invidious comparisons.

We inconsistently criticise many things in others. We criticise Europe because there they have social classes. We have them here, as a matter of fact. Theoretically, we have not. We criticise other nations because of the great disparity between the rich and the poor. The disparity in Europe between wealth and poverty is scarcely greater than in this country. It is no crime to desire to be rich. It is no evidence of moral obloquy. It is a moral and legal crime to seek those riches by criminal and illegal methods. There are men in this country so wealthy that they employ men to help them give away their money. It is sometimes asserted that it is a disgrace to die rich. It is safe to say, however, that

the men who have uttered those statements have drawn their wills.

What is the use of all this nonsense? There isn't any. We all want all we can get, whether in material advantage or popular applause, and we are all seeking to obtain it. The important question is: How are we going to get it?

What are our political principles?

POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, BOSSES, PATRONAGE

IV

POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, BOSSES, PATRONAGE

The traveler who enters the political forest, partly timbered with party principles, with a sturdy second growth of party organization, dense undergrowth of bosses and trailing vines of patronage, must pick his way carefully to avoid getting lost and to emerge unharmed by falling limbs and undiscerned briars. Before entering he must protect his eyes from the light of too intense partisanship and must walk without fear of hobgoblins or giants. If he is to observe wisely, he must be without nervousness and without fear for his personal safety. If he intends to give others the benefit of his observation his investigations must be carried on without any preconceived theory. If his vision is clear he will see the dark forms of thwarted ambitions, disappointed hopes, wrecked careers. He will hear the angry

voices of the spirits of controversy. He will be fortunate, indeed, if he emerges without having fallen over some hidden trunk of political tradition or pierced his flesh with the thorn of selfishness. If, however, he proceeds calmly, with common sense and unbiased judgment, he will find a multitude of things of substantial value.

This metaphor has been drawn with particular care. It seeks to satisfy the lugubriousness of the man with a predilection towards funerals, who can see nothing for the Republic but dissolution. It also aims to strengthen the confidence of the cheerful optimist with Utopian hopes for the Republic's millennium, whose sole contribution toward that outcome is words.

Political parties, popular notions to the contrary, are any two or more individuals acting with a common purpose. The size of the party does not change the proposition, it merely extends the degree of influence.

Political organizations are the standing committee of parties, charged with their internal management between conventions and during campaigns.

Bosses are persons of official or unofficial authority in party organizations whose position is due to their own capacity, or to the

quiescence of those over whom their influence extends.

Patronage, in political parlance, refers to appointments to public office by an executive, the successful candidate of a party, as a reward for party fealty.

The author has read many of the acknowledged leading works on the theory and practice of American government. The great principles have been set forth with a skill, knowledge, and embellishment beyond his capacities. Our literature is rich in disquisitions on the Constitution and the American system. It is equally rich in discussion of present-day problems. Some of those problems have taken the form of practices not anticipated in theory and, therefore, may be better appreciated by people familiar with the practices when expressed in the language of everyday understanding.

Everyone knows that parties were formed almost immediately after the Constitution was adopted. People do not always appreciate that those parties were formed without any reference to the laws but as a result of the inherent differences in men. The minds of some men are suggestive, creative, resourceful in expedient, and bent toward the satisfaction of accom-

plishment. The minds of others are more timid, more conservative, more given to analysis, more given to objection, keener in describing reasons why a proposed plan should not be adopted than in ability to suggest another. These differences make political parties. They apply equally to principles advocated or the best methods of putting them into practice. Add to this the disturbing effect of ambitions, the struggle for personal gain, the conflict of motives, the differences in moral standard, and a comparatively satisfactory perspective may be obtained. The popular understanding of party springs primarily from contact with the established Democratic and Republican parties, or with others shorter in life and fewer in numbers. It is frequently said that the modern political tendency is to act beyond party lines and for the individual to be governed by his own preferences more than by the suggestions of anyone else. This view is accurate if it means that men are less inclined than heretofore to think and act within the lines laid down in the platform utterances of those parties. It is not accurate if it means that men are more inclined to act regardless of any party affiliation, when the word party is taken in the meaning already described. If an individual

insists that he is not a member of either the democratic or republican party, he then is a member of a party made up of all the people who do not believe in the principles advocated by either of these two parties. This must be so, because if not in accord with the principles of either of these two, he is opposed to them, and as there is more than one in such opposition, it makes another party. It cannot be that outside of the two great established parties all men agree among themselves, and they therefore break up into cliques or groups, according to particular lines of thought, and these groups or cliques later develop into parties with the customary committees, leaders, conventions, and platforms. It is entirely inaccurate, politically, to deduce a condition of mental independence unless you know that after having broken one allegiance these men have not formed another. If having broken one and not formed another they are not independent, they are purely negative, and, therefore, non-combatants in political struggles. To go even a step further, these non-combatants likewise form a group, and, under the definition given above, a party, minus only the visible action from which physical and mental vitality could be argued. They are citizen mannikins, not

necessarily unpleasant to look upon, but of no value whatever to the Republic, except as examples of what should not be emulated. They are a dead weight to all others. They accept with complacency the benefits of citizenship, making no return therefor. They are drones in the hive. By virtue of their numbers they mathematically reduce the advantages that ought to belong to the rest. They demand police protection, when as a matter of fact they should be indicted, convicted by the jury of public opinion, and sentenced to expulsion from the country. Not to exercise the right of franchise should entail its loss.

It is wise to urge men not to blindly and servilely follow others. It stimulates the mind to act independently, and that continued exercise develops strength and force. If independence means indifference, however, and justifies the acceptance of benefits as a matter of right, without entailed obligation to others, it is far better to servilely follow some aggressive and moral mind engaged in endeavoring to solve the problems of mankind.

When men argue against party allegiance, they really argue against too strict an allegiance.

Could the citizens of the United States be assembled once a year in a single room, a majority vote would be sufficient to instruct their lawmakers and administrators for the ensuing year. Unfortunately this cannot be done. In order to create concerted action, men of the same beliefs, in whatever part of the country they may live, must send representatives to some agreed point where those representatives may construct a platform, declaring their common principles and provide ways and means to carry them to a fulfillment. Such gatherings constitute a convention and evidence a party. The authority delegated by that convention takes the form of a party organization. This organization takes charge of party affairs between conventions and arranges for and has charge of the conduct of campaigns. All this is very simple, and is not offered with the slightest claim for novelty in discovery. It is only presented because there has recently been an appeal made to the public to do away with conventions as something inherently wicked and devised for robbing the people of their liberties, and as an institution growing solely out of the machinations of evil-minded men. The facts are so much to the contrary and the reasons for a political convention so

simple and so entirely analogous to the representative principles in our government that it seems necessary to reduce it to its final analysis, so that it may be entirely clear to the most educated mind. Simplicity and directness in procedure in the election of delegates to conventions is an entirely different subject for investigation. It ought not to be, but is the fact that delegates in convention assembled differ physically, mentally, socially, educationally, and morally. They even differ as to the best expressions to use in stating their political principles, and temperamentally differ as to the relative importance of the various principles they meet to declare. This results in precedence among the delegates themselves in the actual work of the convention, because experience and knowledge of themselves create influence. Supplement this with the factors of acquaintance and friendship and you have all the elements of a convention. Other features are merely expressions of human weakness.

Having in mind the adjectival denunciation of the workings of conventions and the spasms through which men go in discussing them, it may be a relief to understand that bodies of men gathered in political conventions do not differ from similar bodies gath-

ered for other purposes. They are simply more so.

Heated controversy has arisen over the method of electing delegates to conventions. The more direct and primary the mode of electing delegates may be, the better for all concerned. No particular plan is direct and primary simply because so denominated. The final element to be considered must always be the individual, and no particular plan can be ultimately beneficial which is not devised with full knowledge of the characteristics of individuals. The primary is the first visible action taken which leads up to the convention or to the selection of party managers. The test of the right to vote at the primaries is either prescribed in the rules and regulations of the party itself, or provided by statute. When the latter, it requires a declaration by the party member in some official way stating to which party he belongs. The day for holding the primaries has become generally a matter of law to insure definiteness and equality of opportunity to the voters. In primary reform there are two things that must be accomplished if that reform is to be real. First, to cause the individual who has the right to vote to desire to do so, and, second, to induce him to carry

out his desire. The first of these is beyond the possibilities of law and the second could only be approximately accomplished if it were possible to pass a law which provided that if a man did not vote at a primary he lost his right to do so thereafter. This might be an inducing cause, but it is apparent that it would be impractical and might be unconstitutional, according to the way the law were drawn. The most that the law can do is to simplify the method of voting. Anything more than that is a mere question of human nature and the willingness to act. The election of delegates at a primary is conducive to less excitement than the conduct of a convention; and the conduct of a convention of less interest than a general election. It should be different. It is not. To borrow a figure already used, if all the party voters in the political division where a primary is to be held would meet in a single room and discuss the merits of the persons to be elected as delegates or committee members, the problem would be easily, expeditiously settled, and with little expense. In this instance there are sufficiently small subdivisions so that men could do it. The fact is, they do not. The further fact is, they will not. There must, therefore, be a contest, or, if not one, an

acquiescence in election of persons perfunctorily nominated. Assuming a contest, someone must suggest names for the ticket. That person is usually the local district leader. If those selections are not to be acquiesced in, someone else must ask someone else to meet somewhere and agree upon a set of names to be voted for. Who is to do that? Answer: Anyone who wishes to and will take the time and bear the expense. Much has already been done for the primaries by statute in the State of New York. The statutes covering general elections contain many regulations providing against fraud at the polls. Equally careful *penal* provision covering the conduct of primaries would remove most of the objections raised against present methods.

The recognition of these few general principles of primary directness would do much to simplify present discussion.

Delegating to a committee functions to be performed theoretically by an individual, and then requiring the ratification of the committee's work by all the individuals, is neither direct nor primary, but indirect and secondary.

One thing is certain, whatever our individual suggestions may be as to what is

needed in the way of political reform, this reform, in order to be practical and far-reaching, must start at the primaries. The first step in such reform must be a belief on the part of every voter that a reform is needed. He must next believe it is his duty to contribute toward the reform; thereafter he must so contribute. These three convictions of mind, even under the disadvantages of the present law, will work more for reform than an ideally perfect law will work without them. The common possession of these convictions will bring about the law.

Speaking very generally, Americans are essentially partisan. They like contest; they take sides mentally in competitions in which they do not participate; in any matter of general understanding they argue pro and con with all the intensity of participants. They are free with advice and quick in opposition. They are rarely passive observers. Politically they have these same characteristics. Their interest is only lessened by their meagerness of knowledge of the points involved and a belief that somewhere there is some mystery. This idea is heightened by the virulent discussions they hear or read, carried on by people who are supposed to have special opportunities for information,

and a peculiar capacity derived from that information that makes the efforts of anyone else futile. The fact is, the whole thing is simplicity itself when subjected to the slightest analysis. A man, an idea, a vote—and the problem is at least partly solved. A majority of men acting together, a majority of votes—a result obtained.

To be effective the desire for reform must be accompanied by visible effort.

In politics as in physics, two bodies cannot occupy the same space simultaneously. To secure reform, the "undesirable citizen" must be ousted and the desirable citizen substituted in his place. A desirable citizen is one who knows conditions from his personal contact with them, who understands men from genuine brotherly interest, who recognizes his sacred duty to the State and is persistent in his endeavors to perform that duty. This calls for action, action means contest, contest means votes, a majority of votes means success.

Criticism without effort is stupid. Such stupidity is inexcusable. Inaction which makes crime possible is itself criminal. Men guilty of crime should be deemed political pariahs, to be avoided as spreading contagion. No sophistry can excuse political in-

ertia. No refinement in learned discussion can take the place of conduct.

The measure of a man's virtue, spiritual or political, is the sacrifice he will make in order to live up to his principles. The test of generosity is not what you give, but what you have left.

The practical management of political organizations has a direct effect on the confidence in the principles declared by the party whose management may be under discussion. If that management is intelligent, if it is conducive to putting those principles into practice, if it reflects the average sentiment of the members of the party, it is commendable and useful. If it is employed for the personal aggrandizement of those in positions of responsibility and mirrors only their individual ideas, its utility is confined to the few and the principles of the party suffer in direct consequence. This is the reason, but ought not to be, why criticism of party management results in derogation of party principles. This is a reason why men break their party allegiance, but need not be, and leads to that general confusion and breaking of party lines which prevent the carrying out of platform declarations. This is not logical, but is human, it is a fact.

The only answer possible is a vote at the primaries and a vote on election day. After party managers are selected and until such time as they could be displaced by a vote at the polls, their moral responsibility for the principles of their party must be judged by a stricter standard. They have now become trustees. They have been unindividualized. They were not forced into the positions they hold, and they have no right to complain if their *cestui qui* trust criticises their management up to the time when such management can be changed by votes. If, then, the management is not changed, the managers have a right to assume that their conduct has met with approval. The degree of opposition demonstrates the degree of disapproval. Politics is a man's game, not a child's. It requires the courage of convictions; it waves aside the protest of words and demands the protest of the ballot; it respects philosophy and learning; it responds to conduct.

It is inherent in character for men of similar beliefs to congregate. It is equally inherent for them to have faith in their representatives chosen by themselves until such representatives prove unworthy of trust. Organization and the centering of responsibility has

become an affirmative force in every activity of life. It is so in politics, naturally. It is more so in politics because in politics there is not only the native inclination but the clearly defined example of commercial and industrial life. There is no justification for being startled and outraged, therefore, in finding such a high degree of influence exercised by individuals in party management. The surprise would be justified if the reverse condition existed.

When men in responsible positions of party management are truly representative, they are in name and fact leaders. These leaders are entitled to commendation, applause, and all proper honor to which the party may see fit to advance them. When they deviate from the standard of leadership and reflect only their personal opinions and exercise their delegated authority without reference to their representative capacity, they are properly designated as bosses, with all the opprobrium attached to that word. It does not mean necessarily that a man is a boss because he is called a boss. The reasons for his conduct are not always known. Ambitions that might have been satisfied through his aid and without which remain unfulfilled frequently are the first cause for criticism.

The assistance which a political leader can render through his wide acquaintance in the representative position he occupies forces many demands upon him. His ability to bring about nominations, his endorsements, which secure appointments, and the multitude of instances in which he may bestow favor render him peculiarly liable to attack. When party feeling is not running high the personal equation is apt to control. When the number of disappointed exceeds the number who anticipate personal advantage, the so-called boss is dethroned. This leaves out of consideration the question of financial honesty. Because of the very number of opportunities to make money from his knowledge of conditions and his demand for reciprocation of favors conferred, the leader, or, rather the boss, is liable to a severer criticism than that accorded men in a less public position and with less responsibility. This may or may not be just. It is a fact. It is a risk that the leader or boss assumes, and one which it is childish and unmanly for him to seek to avoid. A common sense view taken of the conduct of leaders and bosses would remove much of the hysteria that attaches to the use of these two words.

The author aims to argue in favor of the

principles of organization and their practice. He recognizes possible and actual abuses, deprecates them, but believes that those abuses are not inherent in the principle itself, but merely in the human agents sometimes selected to carry out those principles. The stigma attaching to these individuals should be confined to them and not accorded to the entire body, of which they are but a part.

When leaders and bosses resent and become peevish at criticism which is not merely captious but emanates from members of their own party, they justify that criticism. A democrat is always violently disturbed by the internal condition of the republicans; a republican with equal frankness criticises and satirizes the internal management of the democratic party. This is for the benefit of the general public. By the same sign one opposed to both of these parties criticises the management of each and by contrast seeks to build up another party on a different declaration of principles. On account of their prominence individuals receive much of the criticism directed against parties of which they are members, and which is really intended for the parties.

The distribution of appointments to office

by an executive furnishes a direct leverage over the conduct of organizations which may almost prove a controlling force. As the individual voter in a party organization looks toward his immediate local leader as the means for his personal preferment, so the local leader looks to him next higher in authority as his means of advancement. So on through the various steps of precedence and authority does each one look to his superior until the one in highest authority is brought in contact with the person with power of appointment. When a candidate nominated in convention accepts such nomination upon a platform of declared principles it is only naturally expected that he will make appointments from among those having the same political beliefs. Whether logical or not, whether wise or not, this has come to be a common understanding. If it is not the intention of the to-be-executive to act in accordance with that understanding he should not accept the nomination, unless first declaring a different position.

The executive thus elected, whether in a state or the nation, holds no office as a rule, and certainly not while President, in the so-called party organization. It would be foolish to claim that if such executive could not

find among the members of his own party a man fit to fill a particular public office he would not be entitled to go beyond the party lines in making a selection. When he does so, he should give the real reason for so doing, and if that reason is sound it will be accepted by party members with even a modicum of common sense.

It frequently happens that in the conduct of an election groups of men not previously affiliated with a particular party, and referring now to the successful one, have aided that party for reasons of their own by their votes, and even may have proved a determining factor in the result. Speaking from the tenets of the doctrine of party advantage, it is proper that the confidence in such men should be shown by sometimes appointing them to office. If that appointment is used by the appointee to the disadvantage of those with whom he is newly affiliated there is just ground for complaint. If his new official position is made the instrument for keeping alive the principles of another party at variance with the one of his adoption, he is inconsistent and the appointment thus made fails to accomplish its intended effect.

In the matter of endorsements by party

leaders for public appointments by an executive there appears at once the terrifying shibboleth of party regularity. Academically, party regularity should be considered that consistency of conduct and persistency in it which tends toward the establishment of common political principles and their carrying into effect by legislation and administration. Practically, regularity depends upon the personal attitude of the particular leader toward the particular person who seeks preferment. Judgment is fallible, and it is too much always to expect that a party leader in awarding his endorsement should not seek an endorsee who bears the test of orthodoxy in party principles and at the same time will act in particular co-operation with the leader who gives his endorsement. This ought not to be, but is, and always will be in greater or less degree as long as endorsements have any influence whatever in securing appointments. Influence in securing appointments magnifies according to the degree of desire for appointment. The use of patronage is frequently employed as the reward for personal favor and personal service rendered, as well as a means of punishment of those who have dared to differ from particular leaders in their opinion as

to what would best conduce to party success.

The potential power of appointment to public office is so enormous that party organizations respond to it directly, and those who may not agree with its particular exercise find themselves only in the penumbra of events, shadowed by the lack of official favor. There is no reason why an executive who necessarily cannot by personal knowledge be familiar with the capacities and party loyalty of every individual should not consult and confer with party leaders who either have that knowledge or are in a position to obtain it. There is every reason why an endorsement of a particular candidate to an executive by a party leader should not be considered as final by the executive. The executive is more familiar with the characteristics and talent demanded to be possessed by the man to be appointed and he has a right to request and demand from those who certify names to him that they represent individuals possessed of the capacities required in the judgment of the executive. Not to accept this theory is to make an executive a rubber-stamp official, to reduce his influence in the estimation of the observing public and to bring ridicule upon the party for which

he stands. Undue addiction to indiscriminate endorsements to the executive by party leaders leads logically to the development of the principle of civil service, in the administration of which it was thought there could be no possible bearing on the carrying out of party principles, which were subjected to a line of demarcation and appointments made after a competitive examination. That principle carried to extremes defeats its own purposes, and somewhere within the limits of advocacy is a common sense mean which will at least assist in a solution of these problems, honesty always to be assumed.

Public preferment as a reward for personal service and not party service is a paradox. What is party service and what is personal service remains for determination in each specific case. Its wise determination does much to prevent those personal antagonisms which, starting in disappointment, assume the light of a party controversy and often result in militating against the carrying out of party principles. The feature of personality thus frequently is the real issue when another is stated, and is equally important in political discussions, as far as party management is concerned.

Some years ago in the City of New York

a primary contest was held and opposition developed to the local district leader because he held the position of executive member (leader) and chairman of the assembly district committee. It was charged that was too great a concentration of authority and prevented the proper development of the district organization. The leader of the opposition was successful, and immediately was elected to fill these two positions as had his predecessor. The result was satisfactory to the majority of the voters because they preferred the personal qualities of the new incumbent to those of the old one. Not even a humorous reference was made to the inconsistency of the result. It is not remarkable that the judgment of a political leader should be warped by the flattery of his friends and adulation of those who expect to profit through his assistance. He is supposed to reflect the opinion of the majority of his subordinate leaders; if he does not, and he insists upon his own at the expense of theirs, and the result of a nomination made by him proves unsuccessful, he need not be surprised if opposition develops at the next primary. The local leaders who surrendered their own opinions, which they believed were right, the results justifying their belief, need not be

surprised if they perceive a waning confidence in their judgment among their followers. A leader to insure the continuance of his authority must be able to sense in advance two things: the majority opinion of his followers and the majority opinion of the voters on election day.

The continued exercise of authority by an individual warps his own judgment, unless he is prepared to be guided in a substantial degree by the majority sentiment of his subordinate leaders. Of the number entitled by registration to vote on election day, a considerable fraction fails to exercise the right. Of those who are entitled by enrollment to vote at the primaries an inconsiderable fraction actually votes. It therefore happens that the use of patronage, that is, the activities of men holding public office, contributes in the largest degree to success at the primaries. Men who recognize an obligation to their leader for assistance in procuring them office are apt to respond to the leader's request to canvass the enrolled voters and induce them to vote. Unless some important question is to be voted upon at a convention, or there is an active contest by candidates for delegates to gain an important nomination, the primaries practically go by default.

As local leaders are expected to elect delegates who will follow in convention the wishes of those of acknowledged authority in the organization, their success in securing such delegates establishes their own position with those in authority. When they are in accord with the policy at the head of the organization, they are in a position to call for the assistance of that leader in securing endorsements for the appointment of their subordinates, who in turn are the measure of their own strength. The relations of the head of the organization with an executive who has appointing power are important, not only for his continuance in influence, but to all those who admittedly act in concert with him. Through the whole gamut of primary activity runs the question of patronage.

Academically, this ought not to be so; actually, it is. It always will be in some degree as long as a service rendered to someone else can bring an advantage to the person who renders it. An ideal but impossible condition this side of heaven would be where every man preferred to have nothing himself, and thought of other people before his mind was allowed to dwell upon his own desire. To expect this condition other than approximately is to waste time in thinking

of it. When any man has succeeded in electing his immediate friends and co-believers as delegates from any particular subdivision to a larger one, he becomes in popular parlance "the head of the delegation." He is consulted as to his and their vote, it being assumed that they will act in concert. The practical endeavor is to secure patronage and distribute it with fair equality among the various local districts, say, in a county. If the appointees are men who receive their reward exclusively on account of personal service rendered to the local leader in carrying the primaries, the organization becomes purely personal and represents nothing but a combination of self-interests.

An equally valid claim for preferment arises from efforts made to elect candidates by services during a campaign. Such appointments are of real advantage to the party and are recognized by discriminating leaders. Unfortunately, political issues are not always so clearly drawn that men aggressively divide regarding them. The nearer those questions approach merely to that of administration, the nearer is the contest one between the ins and outs. If at the primaries delegates were to be elected to a convention which was to

decide whether the party were to instruct its members in Congress to vote for or against a declaration of war, men's minds would be centered on that proposition and not on patronage. When the questions involved are confined chiefly to the wisdom or unwisdom of administration, which does not attract so much general attention, recourse is had to the traditions of the party for the purpose of interjecting some sentimental element with which to arouse public interest.

When party influence and party leadership are used as the inducing cause to force the incumbent of public office to act contrary to his opinion of right or wrong regarding what is really a principle and not a non-essential, they are subversive of good government. Parties are judged by their representatives in public office. Credit for wise appointments should be given to the party at large as well as to the individual who appoints. The opprobrium of unwise appointment should be borne by the party at large, but is usually charged to the executive alone.

No special claim for wisdom is made by the author in these discursive comments. These are matters of common knowledge. It seemed wise, however, to indulge in a moderate analysis to show how political questions

are affected by the personal equation, as are all other questions pertaining to human life, and how main issues may be obscured without this knowledge.

With these facts in mind and the ballot in hand any voter can contribute toward a betterment of conditions, and the degree of improvement will be in direct ratio with the degree of intelligent effort and time employed.

There is no magic or witchcraft involved in any of these points discussed. They are merely human nature in individuals emphasized by temperament and reflected in the light of a particular circumstance. They all yield to common sense analysis and common sense conduct. A question decided in anger is never solved. A knowledge of fundamentals in politics or otherwise is a necessary preliminary to a wise conclusion. If the conclusions do not follow logically from the premises, they are not conclusions, but mere opinions. Political parties, political organizations, bosses, patronage, are only indicia of a system of government depending upon the wishes of the people expressed by means of a ballot. If there is no ballot cast there is no adequately expressed wish. Logic or illogic, wisdom or unwisdom, selfishness or

unselfishness, political morality or political immorality, the ballot is the final arbiter and the majority of those ballots show the composite of American opinion and conduct.

REFORM, REFORMERS, AND REMEDIAL LEGISLATION

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REFORM, REFORMERS, AND REMEDIAL LEGISLATION

Reform is a betterment of conditions; a reformer is a man who endeavors to secure that betterment; remedial legislation is one of the means employed to effect reform. Not counting those in jail, there are few men who would declare they did not desire reform. There is hardly a condition in human experience that is accepted as a finality. The laws governing health are subject to constant change owing to the advance of science; educational methods and systems are daily improving as the result of study, and our public school system is superior to many of the colleges of a century ago; modes of transportation, the transmission of information, the development of industry, life incident to crowded communities, all these are continually creating new conditions, and those new conditions call for new provisions and regulations. These lead up to a demand for

further reform. Essentially, therefore, every man is a reformer. This deduction applies as much to questions within the realm of politics as elsewhere.

The word "reformer," however, in everyday conversation has acquired a significance which is not fair or just, and which does harm to the general idea of reform itself. A reformer is sometimes thought of as a busybody, mingling in every other person's affairs and endeavoring to create a general disturbance for his own advantage. This has been brought about largely by the heat of political controversy, and largely by the fact that some men who devote themselves honestly to the public welfare and become intensely interested in one particular line of thought, do not understand why others with less information do not instantly follow their lead. This is due not to a lack of knowledge of the conditions sought to be reformed but of the elements of human nature incident to the controversy. It does not aid reform for a reformer to assert that the man who opposes him is an obstructionist inimical to the morals of reform and of unclean motive. This is as improper as it is for others in their controversy with the reformer to dodge the real issues

and oppose the proposed reform because they do not happen to like the proposed reform's advocate. On account of the multitude of human activities and the variety of interests in a community, reforms, as a rule, come singly and are the natural evolution of experience.

It may be discovered, as was recently the case in New York City, that numbers of petty merchants were selling from undersized measures and doctored weights. That subject has been taken up by itself, a more thorough inspection ordered, false weights and measures destroyed, and endeavors made to inaugurate a more honest system. That particular reform was not held in abeyance until the cumbersome system of taxation in the City of New York could be remodeled. An abuse may be brought to the attention of the public as to the manner in which a chattel mortgage is foreclosed upon the sewing machine of a poor woman. Public indignation is properly aroused and a reform in the procedure of the foreclosure of chattel mortgages is demanded. While this demand is going on, however, the general public only has in mind the particular incident, we will say, an extreme case of hardship. The public willingly follows the lead of the reformer

and demands a new law, although that reformer is seeking a statute which repeals the procedure of a number of years and substitutes a new method unduly intricate. It may be that this very intricacy prevents the sale of machines to persons who can only purchase by installment. The fact is overlooked that in the incident under discussion the brutality may not lie in the law but in the agent who executed it without any consideration whatever for human feelings. The result of this may be the passage of legislative enactment which in experience proves cumbersome, later requires an amendment, and gradually goes back to the original situation or worse.

An honest desire to perfect a reform with the best motives in mind, hastening to an accomplishment without thorough study of a sufficient number of special cases thus often does not prove of substantial benefit. As a rule no law furnishes a generally permanent benefit which is not consequent upon the most careful examination and study of the entire field in which the single incident has attracted the public attention. Unless the general public has peculiar cognizance of the demand for change, the law becomes without effect, its enforce-

ment a cause of irritation, and its non-enforcement a positive moral harm.

In political activities reforms are thought of chiefly in connection with administration. The development of corporations and the tremendous changes they have brought about in commercial enterprises, the fierceness of competition, has resulted in combinations in business, which, growing out of the desire for a speedy accumulation, has affected the price of commodities in greatest demand by persons of more limited means. Practices of this nature are most difficult to deal with. There are on the one hand to be considered the rights of contract and property and on the other hand the modification of modes of life, which necessarily are changed by the inability to purchase and have at prices to which people have been long accustomed. In the fierceness of these discussions it is difficult for the general public to understand where the real equities are, after being aroused by agitation to a point of angry protest. This, if it lasts until election day, results in the selection of legislators pledged to extreme modification, which would ultimately be as detrimental as the conditions sought to be improved.

It has been stated before in these pages that the thing most difficult of accomplishment in American political life is to have the mind of all the public directed to a single thought at the same time. Except in cases of positive national danger this rarely occurs. It naturally follows that from time to time men pursuing their ordinary desire for change, look about to discover an excuse for a possible reform. The discovery they make may or may not be of a serious nature. To enable them to carry out their plans and have the satisfaction of accomplishing the reform, it is necessary to persuade the people that they are abused. Many are thus made unhappy and discontented who were living in a manner comparatively satisfactory to themselves, and who were unconscious of the disability with which it was claimed they were affected. It is a peculiarity of the forced reform that the man who brings it about usually demands his reward at once at the hands of the public, and that reward is frequently in the form of public office. There is no objection to this even, providing there was a real wrong to be righted, a real abuse to be remedied, and the mode of appeal to the public was truthful and temperate. It is impossible to expect perfection, and little

would be accomplished if there was not somewhere some hope of reward. Usually there are sufficient thoughtful, resourceful men in a community with means, given to the broad study of conditions, and who are prepared to give the wisest conclusions from their investigations. These broad-minded philanthropists furnish the sieve through which are sifted the incongruities which grow out of agitation and the seeking of too speedy results.

In densely crowded centers the demand for reform legislation is of almost daily occurrence. Regulations as to the construction of buildings, provisions to prevent fire, protection of the public safety against criminals, ordinances governing traffic and violation of the laws of health, all these and a hundred others are constantly demanding thought and remedy. The opportunities they present for unwise agitation equally demand thoughtful and serious consideration. Usually the existing laws, almost forgotten, or their execution left in abeyance, would suffice. The inclination toward novelty demands new regulations which of themselves must be experimental. There is thus continuously a state of restlessness full both of harm and advantage. The time of legislators, apart from that they

should give in perfecting the laws regarding the administration of the great departments of the State, is encroached upon not only with demands for specific enactments, but for decision as between a variety of remedies suggested. The limit is reached when the question is asked not whether a particular remedy shall be applied to an existing evil, but whose remedy shall be adopted. Many a valuable proposed reform has been defeated by unwise advocacy. Many an alleged reform that later proves to be insufficient has been put upon the books through the honest but unwise advocacy of men whose characters stood the test of sincerity.

In making these comments the writer can accomplish nothing more than to direct his reader's attention to a general situation in the hope that in all efforts toward reform every thoughtful man will give his best endeavors with calm and discriminating judgment, aided thereto by a possibly clearer knowledge of the motives of the men interested. Many of the best reforms experienced by the public have been the result of honest ambitions of men in competition for the approval of the public. It is not consistent for political parties to exclusively claim the right to inaugurate and institute reforms and to

criticise the efforts of those outside the organization any more than it is for those who are outside to charge existing conditions exclusively to the party which may be dominant at that particular time.

It is popular to assert that this or that question should be kept out of politics.

As a matter of fact, under a system of unrestricted male franchise, all questions practically, apart from religion, are political questions. Even the question of taxation of church property through assessments for improvements is a political question, because that policy has to be determined by the voter who expresses his opinion through his representative in the legislature. The question of protection of the public health, while not a *party* question at all, is a political question. The inspector who examines a spot of contagion is appointed by a mayor who is selected through the medium of the ballot. The fire-escape, means of safety at the moment of conflagration, is inspected by a man subordinate to an official appointed or elected. The price of commodities is affected politically in so far that voters are to pass upon the selection of legislators who are to pass laws governing combinations which seek to

control prices. Until the people appreciate these simple facts and understand what is almost too evident to require statement, that laws are made by men and enforced by men and the makers and enforcers are selected by other men casting their ballots, there can be no genuine reform. It is most desirable that individuals or parties or associations or organizations of whatever kind should busy themselves in the study of conditions capable of improvement. It is desirable that the facts brought out by such investigation should be constantly kept before the public mind and the public constantly called upon to pass its judgment upon them. All this is a part of the doctrine and practice of self-government. Mental and moral and political enervation prevent not only progress but even the demand for reform. There is a wide distinction between reform and a reformer, whether the alleged reformer is associated with a political party or not. In popular discussion there is a clear difference between a reformer and a person interested in the reform. This latter distinction comes, not illogically, from the misunderstanding of men and motives during a political campaign. When a man claims to be a reformer *per se,* he should expect to have his motives sub-

jected to the strictest scrutiny. When a reformer insists that a particular reform can only be properly administered by himself, his position is untenable. When those in a position to make laws covering a particular reform refuse the necessary legislation because the reform is advocated by a particular individual, their position is equally untenable. The main difficulty in effecting reform by legislation is the insistence that it shall be done at once and that the judgment of particular investigators shall be instantly accepted as final. The party managers at that time are appealed to for their assistance, and if it is not rendered without question they are apt to be characterized as obstructionists of the public will. The fact is, the public has not really expressed its opinion on the question involved. A legislature and particular advocates acting in advance of the public's real knowledge are endeavoring to solve questions for that public. In case the reform is not passed, each side asks the public to condemn the other. If the party in power acquiesces in passing a reform the controversy still continues, the question then being which is more important, to have thought of the reform first or to pass the law for it. That parties and individuals are so jeal-

ous of the approval of the general public, so desirous to appear to serve it and to actually serve it, is the best protection for the public and the best guarantee of improvement.

THE PRESS AGENT

VI

THE PRESS AGENT

The necessity for publicity in politics has produced almost a new vocation in that of the press agent.

Competition in business requires publicity to apprise the public of the value of the merchandise offered for sale. Goods and wares, whatever their intrinsic value, kept on the shelves without advertisement yield little profit.

The conduct of individuals and of parties in their relationship to the general public would have their influence much lessened if the public were not fully informed of their objects and what it was claimed was being done for it. Ordinary newsgathering does not always indicate the ideas sought to be conveyed.

Men who are looking for preferment from the public and men in official and semi-official positions frequently employ press agents whose business it is to furnish to the news-

papers special information. The duties of this position are sometimes carried on simultaneously with those of a secretary. Sometimes they are performed by a person occupying another position. As a rule they are recruited from the ranks of newspaper reporters. There is every reason why newsgatherers are best fitted for this field of activity. With their professional experience the range of their information is remarkably broad. They are necessarily keen observers. They are usually shrewd judges of men. Their duties bring them into association with men in every walk of life from the highest to the lowest. They instinctively know what is of human interest and know how to present it in a form that will hold that interest. In reporting their observations they run the gamut of human experience. When their specialty has been reporting political events their advice is frequently sought both by their editors and others who are looking for special knowledge. They are able to anticipate, in many instances, whether the public would be likely to approve or disapprove of a given line of political conduct.

When these reporters are assigned to the national or a state capital or to a city hall in a large city, they sometimes become as

familiar with the questions of legislation and administration as those charged with the actual responsibility.

In recent years appointments to political positions of high importance have been made from the ranks of reporters and usually with admitted success. Their knowledge of men enables them to handle men, and they have met the demands of practical administration. However wise the acts of an administration may be, if the public does not know the actual facts the effect is lost. A wise administrator sees that these facts are furnished. Prospective candidates and those in charge of political movements frequently employ these press agents to keep constantly before the public their own virtues and accomplishments for the instruction of the public and by much reiteration try to gain its approval. The press agent from his training as a newspaper reporter understands what is recognized as news by a city editor and is naturally able to get much matter into print which would be rejected had it been prepared and presented by one less experienced. The very fact of the nature of his employment opens up opportunities for information which are denied to the average reporter.

Prospective candidates and candidates who

cannot afford a press agent are at a great disadvantage. So interested is the public at the time of a campaign that the large daily newspapers usually assign reporters to the duty of accompanying candidates on their tours, so that they can report not only what is of general interest and which would ordinarily go over the Associated Press wires, but can add items of peculiar personal interest. These particular items are not infrequently furnished by the candidate. At the time of the campaign the public is especially entitled to know as much as possible about those persons between whom it must make a selection. Not infrequently campaigns are conducted quite as much around the qualities of a candidate as they are around the issues declared in the platform. Public officials are not required to draw upon their own purses for this luxury, as the same result is accomplished through a public appointment. It has come to be recognized in practice that a newspaper man can wisely be appointed to fill an office closely associated with that of the executive, as, for instance, that of secretary. The attitude of the press toward an executive is not unaffected by the tact and judgment of the reporter-secretary. Many of the wrinkles caused by the curt and tact-

less personal manner of executives are ironed out by that same secretary. It is more than human to expect that reporters who are compelled by the direction of the city editor to seek interviews and to gather information in that pursuit from public officials should not be influenced by the manner of those officials in this intercourse. The press bureau thus established by an executive becomes of great importance both to him individually and to his administration. Rumors of this or that fact caused to be printed evoke comment editorial and otherwise, and the public pulse is taken. If rumor develops favorable comment, the actual condition will later develop. If the opposite occurs, some contemplated project in legislation may be abandoned. The same press agency is used as a practical means of disparaging the motives and conduct of those who disagree with the policy or the administration of an executive. It is a tribute to the sensitiveness of men in political activity, whether official or not, that they are peculiarly and properly keen to the attitude of the public toward them. They know that a wrong impression instilled in the public mind may react at the polls and their continuation in official life be terminated. It is entirely

natural that public men should wish to have their best efforts emphasized and their errors in judgment minimized. While a certain degree of self-exploitation is not only natural but proper and desirable, it may be carried to too great an extent. Sometimes this tendency is carried to a ridiculous degree, and men are not satisfied with the publicity given to their official acts but indulge in undue exploitation of their personal characteristics. It is carefully noted that up to the early age of ten they had never even tasted whiskey, and from then to the age of fifteen they had never struck their parents. The innocent prattle of childhood is quoted as having been prophetic of some future greatness. If it is desired to demonstrate to the public that the man is self-made, viewed in the light of his meager opportunities, the public is quietly informed that in early years he went without food to buy books, and, conscious of the great future before him, in order that he might be particularly available for use by the public, he indulged in none of the ordinary pastimes of life. Every moment was used in preparing for his lifework. It takes but little reflection with these things in mind for a seeker after light regarding candidates or officials, if he has any knowl-

edge of human nature himself, to make proper allowances for these weaknesses and come to a relatively correct conclusion. The abuses of exploitation are shown when a candidate or official with opportunities to get matter printed through the resourcefulness of his press representative deliberately starts what he knows are only rumors to the disparagement of an adversary. The public is then treated to harrowing tales of supposed early misconduct. It is told, especially if there is a prohibition sentiment in the community, that this opposing candidate once became drunk when only six years old, and that in the face of a maternal prohibition he actually smoked cigarettes before arriving at the age of ten. A mistake in counting change when employed as a clerk is magnified into a defalcation, and a genuinely wholesome character is sacrificed on the altar of contest with practically no means or time to meet the charges; the public must still be the deciding, discriminating judge. Whether the practice referred to shall continue or not, depends upon the conscience of the men in a position to instigate it.

The first impressions gained by the public are apt to be lasting. If a prospective candidate creates the idea that he has a genuine

and unselfish desire to serve the public, that impression after nomination helps him materially at the polls. If he has a particularly dangerous competitor for nomination, he naturally desires that the public should not have so favorable an opinion of his competitor as of himself and employs the means just suggested. If there is some topic of peculiar interest occupying the mind of the public, such as the encroachment of the corporations upon individual rights, rumors are sure to appear in the press that one candidate has always been in favor of the general public as against corporations from his earliest years, and that the other is actually in the pay of these corporations. The responsibility for starting rumors or making misstatements by one candidate regarding another is not justified by the excitement of competition. It is entirely allowable to argue from facts regarding an individual not at that moment in public office that the characteristics indicated by those facts will preclude him from being an efficient public official. Untruth is not justifiable in politics any more than it is elsewhere. Apart entirely from principle, frankness and truthfulness toward the public is the best policy in the long run. This may not be the highest standard of con-

duct. It is better to be decent and honest with a selfish purpose than not to be decent or honest at all. Doubtful practice is bound to be discovered, if only by political opponents, and through them the information of it is acquired by the public in general. As a matter of moral principle a man should not lie. If he does not recognize morals it takes but slight argument to demonstrate that lying must be founded on mere vanity, for this vanity assumes that a man who lies is so clever and his statements so cunningly made that no two men will ever compare notes regarding him and discover his discrepancies. The fact is they always will and always do, although it may be at so subsequent a period that much harm has been done. On the other hand, if the public through press agents or otherwise finds itself justified in believing in the truthfulness and sincerity of a man, it will pardon much that may result from his errors in judgment or unnecessary zeal. There is hardly any act in life which may not be made provocative of good or conducive to evil. Press agents and publicity bureaus are not confined to individuals. Bureaus of municipal research have been recently established whose very wise purpose is to carefully examine into

the results of municipal administration and give those results to the public in succinct and readable form at frequent intervals. This course is more apt to result in just opinions in the public mind when these subjects are examined calmly than when the same facts, however truthful, are only given to the public when it is excited by campaign strife. Other organizations have been perfected whereby at the national and state capitals similar services are performed. Services rendered to the public without the demand for immediate recognition of those who perform them are apt to be unappreciated, but are equally of lasting value. Publicity is thus an instrument for good or harm, according to the manner of its use. Knowledge of its employment should enable one to judge of actual conditions with reasonable accuracy.

OFFICE SEEKING AND OFFICE HOLDING

VII

OFFICE SEEKING AND OFFICE HOLDING

It does not justify a claim for brilliancy on the part of the writer to say that there has recently developed to a marked degree a tendency toward general criticism and an unwillingness to accept any condition without comment. This particularly applies to political life. It may be that men have more confidence in their own judgment than they formerly had. It may be that their confidence has been shattered. The fact remains that the public generally has come to look down on men in public office instead of looking up to them. They have come to discredit the motives of candidates rather than give them the benefit of the doubt. The reason for this may possibly be a comparison of the individual with an ideal occupant of the position. This tendency is not provocative of good, and does much to discourage honest effort. Whatever may be the motive

behind the remark, it is a common habit to cast slurs on the man who seeks public office. This is not justified either in principle or practice. There is no reason why a man believing in his own capabilities should not desire to attain public office and receive all the honor and dignity incidental thereto. This gives him prestige with his friends, makes him a potential factor in the community, and responds to the instincts for betterment incident to human nature. It is not more remarkable that a man should seek for himself the satisfaction that he may obtain from service to the public than it is that he should seek to satisfy himself in business or professional life. It would indicate a deplorable condition if men were not responsive to such instincts. It is not more discreditable for one man to wish to be elected an alderman than it is for another to wish to be elected President of the United States. It no more justifies disparagement of motive for a man to use all honorable means toward appointment to a clerkship than for one of high social opportunities to desire the dignity of a position in the cabinet which is subordinate to the President. The test is one of motive. Competition for position of itself should increase the number of seekers,

and by their very number the public has a better opportunity for selection. If the award of public favor through intelligent effort is not a prize worth seeking, then the opinion of the public is not worth having. The fact that a man seeks office through the instrumentality of party influence has nothing to do with the question. If it is taken for granted that the public is worth serving, and that to serve the public is a laudable ambition, there will be no cause for captious criticism of those who entertain that ambition. If this is admitted, an important element now contributing toward restlessness in political affairs will be eliminated. If it is laudable to desire public office, it is not laudable to seek it when pretending not to. It is, of course, more flattering to a man to be discovered by the general public and to meet a request on the part of that public to enter its service. It rarely occurs that an individual is so generally known by virtue of his talents and experience that the public makes such a demand. He is ordinarily brought to the public's attention through some accidental circumstance in connection with a public question. If he then demonstrates his capacity, the opportunity demanded follows. The fact that he responds

to it and does his duty does not mean that he has been martyrized for the public. It means that he has acceded to a demand that meets his desires. If he claims to be doing all this at constant disparagement and loss to himself, either that service is not ingenuous and altruistic or he is not giving his service in the spirit he claims. Ingenuous service furnishes its own reward. On account of the difficulty of an individual in bringing himself to the notice of the general public, it happens that he seeks preferment most usually through the medium of party influence. The party is always before the public, appointments have to be made by the executive, the character of those appointments are a part of the life of the party and its means for carrying out policies for which it stands. As citizens cannot be always informed of the detailed conduct of particular holders of minor positions in public office, they naturally look to the party of which these appointees are members, and they judge of the service of the individuals by the general results of party administration.

The desire to be recognized by the public is so intense that frequently men will ask their friends or hire their acquaintances to

stir up a public demand, and then with mock modesty will yield to it. Then they become convinced after a period of reflection that the demand was real and feel that anyone else who seeks preferment must necessarily have low standards. Persons in this position are annoyed at the importunities to which they are exposed by others seeking subordinate appointments. They have no excuse for such annoyance. It is incidental to our system of government. Appointments have to be made by somebody, and there will always be someone wanting them. One of the chief *duties* of high office is selecting subordinates.

It sometimes happens that a successful candidate, exhausted by the efforts to obtain a nomination and an election, but deeply conscious of the fact that he has attained it, adds to the general public discontent with office-seekers by formal addresses stating the annoyance to which he is subjected by those who seek his official recognition. The public, ignorant of the efforts made by the successful candidate to secure his position, and he may be an entirely useful public servant, unjustly gives its disapproval to the applicants for minor positions, harm results to those who do not merit it, and the usefulness of the actual appointees is minimized.

It is unquestionably far more manly to declare a willingness or even a desire to accept public office, if such is the fact, and to endeavor by all honorable means to attain it, and then to perform the duties of the office with due recognition of the honor that has been conferred, rather than to give the public the false impression that the favor has been conferred upon it.

The writer recalls an incident relative to the election of delegates to the last Republican National Convention. A distinguished citizen of the City of New York properly wished the honor of being a delegate to that Convention, and asked a local leader to do what he could to secure his selection by congressional convention. The leader gladly responded, gave his best efforts, and secured promises from a number of delegates. Unexpected conditions arose and other candidates developed. The distinguished citizen announced that his name could not be used as a means of creating factional strife, and his adherents were left in the embarrassing position of having tried to aid him at his request and then being deserted at the first sign of trouble, when the proposed candidate was only called upon to remain in one position long enough to permit despised local

leaders to gain for him the honor he sought. He was willing to accept the honor, but unwilling to have anyone know that he desired it. The same gentleman had frequently in public utterances deprecated the unseemly scramble for office. He sought honor, another may seek only the sure pay from public employment; there is no difference in principle. The willingness to give the best service one can to the public, and actually doing it, justifies the motive for seeking office and conduct while in it.

It is well known among party managers who are accustomed keenly to observe the actions of men in politics, that the sooner a candidate nominated gets facts about himself before the public, the sooner he gathers support to himself. This initial momentum adds greatly towards bringing about a favorable result.

Within a few years, in the City of New York, another gentleman with laudable ambition to hold public office, caused his name to be mentioned in connection with two separate offices. With an equally laudable ambition he had in mind to leave no stone unturned to secure one or the other. Before the convention met his lithographs were prepared with his name upon them, but the title of the office for which

he was to be a candidate was blank. Upon his nomination the office was filled in and he became an aggressive and successful candidate. In all of this the writer can see nothing more than forehanded means, not unworthy, to accomplish an honest result. During the preliminary efforts for nomination the gentleman in question exhibited a coyness and diffidence that suggested that only by physical force could he be compelled to take a nomination. At the same time full information was given to the public through the press of the aggressive efforts of others to seek the same nomination, and he himself furnished the arguments why those others, possibly his equals, would prove undesirable candidates. After being installed in his new position the person referred to publicly expressed the annoyance to which he had been subjected through the merciless importunities of those who sought his official favor. This incident amounts to nothing in itself except as one of glaring inconsistency, and is one of a number which keep the public mind in a condition whereby it unconsciously and readily yields to the general tendency toward disparagement of all seekers of public office. If in this instance the candidate had been frank and ingenuous, his

nomination would have been secured with less effort, his election would have aroused more enthusiasm, and he would not have been responsible for much undeserved harm inflicted on others who had as much right to desire advancement as had he. It would have been better for the public had he been more honest in motive.

Sometimes independent movements are started outside of political organizations to secure nominations which arouse general interest against a local party where the administration under ordinary circumstances represents a preponderance of votes. In Philadelphia and in New York City this has of late years not infrequently been attempted. The discussion surrounding such a movement has a great tendency to arouse unusual interest, and men are stirred who otherwise might have no participation in the campaign whatever. Conference committees are appointed and nominations that are above the average result at the hands of all parties. Those movements, however, are represented by committees. Those committees have sub-committees, and the results are worked out according to time-honored political traditions. The strongest minds have the greatest influence, and individuals of widest

knowledge of conditions being most potential, are governing factors. The popularity and success of nominations thus made depend upon the ability of the men actually responsible for them to analyze what is in the minds of the citizens, and not what they think ought to be there. It takes rare judgment on the part of a candidate, however selected, to know how to appeal to the public on behalf of himself and those for whom he stands. The attitude of the public toward a candidate in a campaign, however faltering, and its attitude toward him when he takes official position are strangely different. The public accepts as a rule the good faith of men of its own selection at the polls, and for a time at least looks up to them and listens to their utterances with careful respect. What a candidate says before he is elected is discounted. What he says soon after becoming an official is liable to be accepted as wisdom founded upon the knowledge assumed to be in the mind of anyone who occupies that particular position. The public does not stop to think that it requires time in public office to acquire actual knowledge, and that what is uttered early in an incumbency is merely opinion. The American people have an inherent respect for official authority. They do

not always pay proper respect to those exercising that authority.

The public really by its votes only grants a lease to exercise authority and does not give a final title. The demand for novelty and the fact that its absence may indicate the inability to furnish it, and that opposition can be readily stirred up, forces an official sometimes to continually suggest modifications and experiments in law which are fraught with no permanent benefit. It cannot be possible that the mere taking of a public office instantly insures the possession of wisdom. Legislation, according to law, should originate in legislatures. The executive has done his full duty when he makes clear and explicit recommendations to the lawmaking body as to what he considers will insure an improvement of conditions. Upon the adoption of his suggestions, if they develop to be wise, he, of course, receives, and should receive, popular commendation. Men in legislative bodies are equally jealous of their reputation. They may differ as to the wisdom of particular proposals. If that difference results in a general exchange of views between members of the legislature and the executive, although the result may not be in detail what either desires, but something

that meets their common judgment, the public has been benefited. If to the public view the differences of opinion assume the form of a fight between an executive and a law-making body, and those observing the contest divide themselves between friends and enemies of the executive, the effect of the law, no matter what it is, is largely lost. The people speak through representatives in law-making bodies their opinions as to what laws should be passed. The executive does his best duty when he gives his full efforts after recommendation to the carrying out of laws.

These statements have been made in general form, as they apply as well to the capital of the nation as to the capital of the state. The influence of an executive through the power of appointment and the solicitude on the part of legislators lest the executive veto some measure of theirs because they do not approve proposed measures of his, have resulted in the exercise of influence by executives never contemplated by the originators of the Constitution.

When the public appears to demand something, whether it actually does or not, the demand is for instant action. In the eyes of the people the executive then appears as the instrument for accomplishment. He is, in-

deed, in a way, that instrument, and a most forceful one. If his official authority and his personal influence are combined, and he employs every leverage that he can to influence those who may differ with him officially, the result he seeks is apt to be accomplished. If it is accomplished on account of the pressure he is able to exercise on individuals, the benefits are not permanent because there will be another executive and another legislature. If the results represent a combination of the legislative mind and executive opinion, the result will be more permanent and more beneficial. The influence of patronage and power of veto, the readiness of the public to listen to the utterances of an executive, a single individual, rather than to the opinions of a legislator, one of a number, make his actual influence tremendous. The balance between the executive and the legislative branches has been destroyed in practice, if not in theory. Anyone who expects that an executive with full knowledge of his official authority, alive to all that may be accomplished by it and exhilarated by public applause or demand, as the case may be, can be literally and finally impersonal and devoid of every human characteristic, expects much. If the public can secure an approximation to normal condi-

tions it does well. The sobering effect of responsible authority, the desire to merit the favorable verdict of calm-minded men, the level-headed judgment which discriminates between applause and approval, have brought the general standard of American executives to a level to which the people "can point with pride."

The securing of capable judges is one of the continued problems of American politics. The Federal system has much to commend it in its appointive system of tenure during good behavior. There is substantial argument in favor of the position that the executive can acquire better knowledge of capabilities for judicial responsibility than can the people acting as a body. Their knowledge must be more or less limited and their opportunities for acquiring such knowledge more limited. In the states the elective system generally prevails, with tenure limited, and with higher salaries. The same instinctive desire for professional preferment applies here as it does in civil walks. There is no just reason why a lawyer, honestly believing in his own capacity and desiring to be elevated to the bench, should not seek election or appointment to that honorable position. Human nature does not vary with law-

yers any more than it does with laymen. The nominations are sought with equal energy and sometimes, unfortunately, with methods which cannot be as readily justified. The authority of a judge is so final and so habitually acquiesced in by the public that there must be a degree of consecration which is genuine and final. For a lawyer with a five thousand dollar practice to seek a judgeship with a ten thousand dollar salary is neither unnatural nor discreditable, but when in seeking this preferment he alleges that he is doing it at a sacrifice, he not only deceives the public but makes himself a cause for laughter at the hands of those who are providentially gifted with a sense of humor. Elected, it is not necessary for him to view his former professional brethren with disdain or sadness. Fortunately this does not generally occur, but men are occasionally elevated to the bench by accidental circumstances, who forget that their greatest assistants are the lawyers practicing before them, and this attitude of mind is indicated by unnecessary and uncalled for comments. The judge for the public to seek, it seems to the writer, is a man not necessarily of rare powers so much as calm and even-minded judgment and ability to determine what the law

is before declaring it with equableness of temper and an appreciation at every moment that he is still human, although gowned with authority. He need not complain of the irksomeness of his duties because he cannot discover any law which prevents his resigning. His utterances on every subject should be guided with the greatest care, because what he says even off the bench is listened to intently by the public. It is possible for a judge temperamentally unfit for his position, although intellectually capable, to affect the findings of a jury by a tone of voice or a shrug of the shoulders, while his charge to that very jury is entirely within the law. These remarks are offered in the sincere hope that the public will be alive for its own sake to its unending responsibility in making sagacious selections at the polls of men who are to interpret the law under which we all must live.

THE PRESS

VIII

THE PRESS

The chief political and least understood element in American life is that of the press. The freedom of the press is as essential to the American political system as the air is to the human system. If the air is pure, the human system is invigorated. If the spirit of the press is pure, the political system is apt to be. Theoretically, the press is an impersonal instrument. Actually, it reflects the opinions and wishes of the individual who owns it. Somewhere back of the title-page is an ownership traceable to a human entity. The larger the paper, the more money involved in its development, the more people there may be who contribute to its ownership. Among these there is an individual or small committee expressing the opinions of the proprietors. For the purpose of estimating its range of influence, the newspaper is simply an individual magnified to the number of its readers. While

there have been many abuses by the press and many issues distorted, many personal ambitions helped and many individuals destroyed, newspapers can no more be dispensed with as a part of American life than can a vital organ of the body. The power of the press is beyond computation in crusades against abuses. Prosecuting attorneys are kept alive to their duties. Men in responsible positions are fought and overcome when they commit wrong. The anti force of the people is personified in the press. In the prosecution of crime, in the detection of bad morals, in securing punishment for evil conduct, the press acts as a unit, and its force cannot be withstood. Were it not for the press, influences could be brought to bear aiding the commission and condonation of crime against which individual prosecutors would be impotent. Newspapers furnish the information of derelictions without which officials would frequently be unable to enforce the law. The force that the press of the United States can bring to bear in preventing the continuance of an abuse, in taking from a man the instruments with which he may do wrong, in supporting the weaker against the stronger, is so tremendous that it is not fully grasped by the critics.

On the other side of the problem, newspapers rarely act in concert. As disseminators of news they act along like lines, accentuated only by the particular genius of the men in charge of the management. The force of the press in political affairs in conducting an anti crusade is as great as it is sometimes impotent in conducting a pro crusade. No man invests hundreds of thousands of dollars in a great metropolitan newspaper for the purpose of passing his time or for any supposed assistance in developing his health. He does it for profit and seeks a circulation to make its columns more profitable. No one can object to this. There is nothing immoral in a man's desiring to profit himself through the cashier's office of a newspaper. When, however, a newspaper prints as a fact what is nothing but an opinion, it commits a wrong against the community which can never be entirely righted in the hurry of events, because the true statement of the fact may never reach the reader who first saw the misstatement. If newspapers were to be guided by an absolute standard, they would all report the same event in the same way, excepting only as its description might vary according to the literary capacity of the reporter. The facts would be the same.

The deductions from those facts, if the newspapers are to exercise their fullest and best influence, should be confined to the editorial column. It is the right of the editor, as it is of any individual, to make any argument he may desire from facts. He may advocate any policy he considers best conduces to the betterment of affairs. When he draws that deduction from a misstatement of fact, he violates the freedom accorded the press, and deceives the people. In a controversy between an individual and a newspaper, the individual is always at a hopeless disadvantage. He cannot get his views before the people in the way he has the right to expect. The fact that newspapers are no more than individuals is best shown in a campaign. There are actually few non-partisan newspapers. The meetings held by a particular party are reported in the columns of the paper advocating that party's principles as enthusiastic and well attended. A public uprising is described, a momentum is established from which a deduction is drawn which is untrue and illogical. To a republican paper the republican meetings are enthusiastically attended and are treated as a harbinger of success. In the democratic papers the same condition prevails. In a paper ad-

vocating the policies of neither of these parties, some small gathering may be described as a mighty uprising by way of protest. The public reading these papers are not enlightened as to the facts, and unless they know the policy of the particular papers whose columns they read, they are frequently as far from the events as if they did not know of their occurrence.

The moral responsibility of newspaper management is one of the greatest in human affairs. The newspaper is practically the only means of gathering information to-day for the average man. A century ago it took weeks and months for a person to learn what had happened in a nearby state, or in any other country. The first President of the United States had to rely upon the mails for information, and they were exclusively expensive. To-day for one cent any reader can find out what has happened in any part of the globe within the preceding twenty-four hours. When that news is reported incorrectly, or the facts of governmental administration are not portrayed with truthfulness, it is impossible for the public to arrive at a correct conclusion which justifies action.

It will always be that the owner of a paper may favor one individual and oppose another.

It is entirely human, with the power at hand, for an editor to favor a friend and harm an opponent. There is nothing mysterious about a newspaper when you consider that it is only an individual speaking. His method of doing it may be mysterious and the public may be deceived. Strange as it may seem, some particular reform, elaborated by one paper, is carefully avoided by another or merely noted. The quick reporting of news is a proper argument for the purchase of a particular paper. The clearness of description is an argument for another. Papers are conducted in the manner best calculated to appeal to the particular part of the public which they wish to reach. If the papers of the United States should unanimously agree that the affairs of the country were prosperous, they would be accepted as such. Agitation carried on by the press unsettles the public mind. That uncertainty prevents unity of action, and that lack of unity of action prevents stability. A hint in the columns of the press of an impending failure may bring that failure about. An intimation that the credit of an individual has been impaired may prevent that individual from re-establishing himself upon a more substantial financial foundation. To repeat an insinuation

derogatory to an individual may destroy him, and he has no defense. Notwithstanding all this, the public pulse can be taken through the columns of the newspapers more accurately than in any other way, because those newspapers reflect in a degree the opinion of their readers. Constant iteration and reiteration of a statement in the press frequently leads to belief in the existence of something which may not have existed in the beginning, but is actually created by the repetition. The very fact of discussion may bring about the condition which was alleged to have existed in the beginning. The competition between papers for the approval of the purchasing public is the best guarantee to the public that they will not go beyond all bounds. Newspapers are like an individual; they like to crush out an abuse and claim the credit. They like to establish a reform or a change and claim the credit for that. Such credit increases their circulation.

While the press may with more or less accuracy reflect the mind of a community, it may not be able always to change that mind. The responsibility of the press for good government is vital in the last degree. But it is also possible for an editor to change the attitude of the public toward a man striv-

ing for better things, so that whatever he does finds no response in the heart of the community. On the other hand, the public rush to the columns of the papers to state an ill-treatment on the part of officials. They may cite cases of public oppression, or they may refer to the unnecessarily harsh enforcement of the law. An editorial reprimand is frequently sufficient to remedy an abuse.

The press should be the audible voice of the community. Whether it speaks in a whisper or in a shriek depends upon the policy imposed upon the paper by its owner. It is impossible to conceive of a free government being carried on without the watchful eye of a free press. Yet it is an everyday occurrence to see criticisms in the press which are unmerited and unjustified and which do not warrant the conclusions drawn from them. This is not the act of an impersonal press. It is the temper of the individual who controls the paper, and as such should be judged. If viewed in this light the harm a paper can do is minimized. It is not too much to say that the majority of the population of the United States gets substantially all its information from daily or weekly publications. These comments are not made in the expectation of changing the policy of any

paper. They are merely made for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that a newspaper with all its power for good or evil is merely the expression of individual opinion vastly magnified.

If the holder of an important office received a letter expressed in the same words in which an editorial is phrased, he might pay little attention to it. When he sees a criticism of his public acts in a newspaper and knows that it will be read by hundreds of thousands of individuals to whom he is accountable, he is more apt to realize that he is a trustee for those people, and not to believe that he has an inherent title to his office.

There can be no substantial progress in political affairs in the United States, or in commercial affairs, without the support of the best newspapers. With the church, the owners of newspapers have it in their power to bring about the most desirable results for society. It is a matter of satisfaction to a careful observer that, whatever may be the consistency of this or that newspaper, they do more to make possible combined action on the part of the people than any other single instrumentality. When a newspaper is devoted to agitation for the sake of agitation it keeps the public mind in a state of unrest,

and its value to the community is nothing. When it keeps before the community subjects for proper deliberation and discussion and furnishes the information from which the public may form just opinions, it is the next important factor to law in preserving order. A newspaper is the exponent of personal views impersonally expressed. The moral standards of papers are the moral standards of their owners. While a newspaper is a commercial enterprise, it has sentimental characteristics which it cannot avoid. Prominent opinion to the contrary, sentiment in one form or another is largely a controlling feature of American political life. It is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution that there should be masses and classes. The fact unfortunately is that there are masses and classes, and always will be to a degree. But what that degree is or should be in the future, depends more upon the policy of the public press of the United States than upon any other single power. The statement in a newspaper of the existence of a class does much to create it.

It remains with the people to decide whether a newspaper shall be an instrument for good or evil. They are the judges, and must continue to be, whether the spirit in

which a paper is published squares to standard or not. No paper would long continue any one policy if the editor were conscious that it would alienate him from an appreciable number of his readers.

The deduction from these comments relative to the press the writer hopes will accentuate individual responsibility. The ultimate stability of the so-called American system of government rests upon the common sense and sound judgment of the individual citizen. The majority of those citizens can determine anything they wish. When American citizenship is negative in its political and moral virtue the nation is negative. When it is affirmative and aggressive and wise, the nation is affirmative, aggressive, and wise. When a man believes in himself, he believes in his country; and when a majority of citizens believe in themselves, they are the country and measure the country's progress.

LAW AND MORALS

IX

LAW AND MORALS

Law is dependent on morals. Morals are assisted by law. If the development of each proceeded equally it would mean a millennium. Political morality is arrived at regardless of statutory authority. Obedience to a statute may prevent immoral conduct, but may not indicate real morality in the person who obeys the law. Originally conduct was regulated by imperial edict. A ruler with supreme authority said what his subjects should or should not do. The latitude given to them was limited, indeed, and it took all their attention to meet the requirements imposed and avoid punishment. Many conditions now require statutory regulation which, at the foundation of the government, were unknown. So complex have become the regulations of social and commercial life that it has been found difficult to determine the duties of citizens toward each other and toward the state. These questions have been solved as far as

may be by legal provision. The fact remains that in the activities of politics as well as elsewhere fundamental principles of morality must be the substantial governing force. This is so as a matter of principle and a matter of necessity. No good could come to a community where the guiding principle of conduct was merely that of expediency. Where the line of law and the line of morality cross or merge provides a subject for the most metaphysical discussion. The present tendency of legislation apart from punishing crime and prescribing methods for exercising political rights, is toward standardizing human conduct by law. This is nothing more than an endeavor to substitute statutes for morals. The penal code is amended each year to cover new derelictions and render conviction of older crimes more easy. The captions of the penal code should be a fair index of political and social crimes. Really, they are not, and the aggregate of misconduct unnamed in the code may well be of greater detriment to a community than actual violations of law. The theory of the penal code is to furnish a summary of all those acts which are admittedly detrimental to the people as a whole. The actual degree of morality of the entire people is not measured by the proportion to the

whole of the number who violate that code. It is exemplified by the realization of the majority of the citizens of their duty to the State and to each other.

Every year the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States submits a balance sheet purporting to show the nation's strength. That summary discloses the wealth of the country in the aggregate and per capita. It sets out the commercial development, the proportionate savings of the people in banks, and it strikes, so to speak, a trial balance. This is a fair intimation of the standing of the country. The actual strength of the country could only be disclosed by a census, which would indicate the relative proportion of men actuated by moral principles, and those without such standards. Fortunately, in this country through the work of the churches and the inculcation of moral principles, there is a constant tendency toward improvement. The work of moral forces preserves to each citizen his individuality, but his responsibility and development depend upon himself. It is weakening in a free government, founded on the ballot, to curtail the development of individuality through the paternalism of law. It is a wise philosophy which decides what men should not do. It is a wiser philosophy

that does not prescribe what they must do. Reliance upon law alone, robs morality of its force. The restless seeking after change, persistent endeavor to experiment in legislation, are not productive of the most beneficial results.

The courts have jurisdiction not only in interpreting law, but in reading into conduct the equitable principles of morality. The judiciary is a much better guide, as a rule, than a legislature. The principles it enforces are universal; not spasmodic and not experimental. In applying the principles of equity the court has the whole range of prior human experience from which it may arrive at a judicial conclusion. In legislation there is rarely given the thought and investigation required to crystallize broad wisdom in the form of law.

An unenforced or unenforceable law destroys by that much the respect for law itself. Where people are sufficiently few in number to permit of their being brought together frequently in personal contact they govern themselves by their own traditions, and their minds readily agree upon a common mode of conduct. Men, however, are so readily influenced by others, the aggressive man has such a predominance over the

man of a negative disposition, that when we act in large bodies we fail to observe the simpler instincts of man, and issues become involved. Doubtless every sentiment here expressed has already occurred to the reader in his own deliberations.

In a government such as ours there must be constant compromise of individual ideas for the benefit of the great mass of people. The public is not a body to experiment upon. Public discussion, except for individual exploitation, amounts to nothing unless the person who discusses exemplifies his theory in his own conduct.

The United States was not organized into a government for the purpose of demonstrating as an intellectual problem that our system was wiser than any other system. It was organized for the purpose of giving the greatest latitude without license to an individual to work out his earthly career and to profit as fully as may be by his own talents and energy. If an advantage is given to one portion of a community not accorded to another through the means of law, the advantage secured is only temporary. We have been taught from childhood about certain inalienable rights. We have not studied with equal care the doctrine of unavoidable obligation.

The man who steals from the public steals partly from himself, although he may be a net gainer in the amount taken. If, however, that process were carried to an extreme, it can readily be seen that the law would be evaded, and if the majority were engaged in it, the minority would be without protection.

A man should be moral not from fear of punishment but from the consciousness that by being otherwise he harms himself and the rest. There is little virtue in non-performance. More good comes from a community where aggressive instincts are kept in restraint by moral obligation, than from one where men are peaceable because lacking the initiative necessary to commit an overt act. The test that is being placed upon American citizenship is not the test of rights, but the test of obligation. The doctrine of community of interest is just as strong when citizens are counted in thousands as when they are counted in hundreds. The multiplication of numbers merely obscures the issues. If a man does not obey the law as a matter of moral principle, he may well do so as a matter of selfish expediency. Most of the violations of law occur because the offender believes that he may not be detected, and that his particular offense does not affect the com-

munity at large. If each man could be brought to the conviction that his offense might place offenders in the majority, he would be less inclined to offend. No one knows when his own offense may serve to bring about a majority of offenders.

A crime of lasting harm to the state is committed when a man votes more than once at the same election. Next in harmfulness is for a man who has the right to vote not to exercise that right. For a man to vote more than once, or for another man wrongfully to induce him so to do, is treason to our institutions. The immediate effect of that single duplication of votes may not be felt. By the casting of an illegal vote every other person has been robbed of his right under the law to express himself in the mathematical proportion he bears to all the rest, and has been deprived of a right for which there is no compensation. There can be no majority rule if any one of the votes out of which grows that supposed majority is not representative of an actual individual voter. How is it possible ever to determine whether a majority of the people have voted in favor of this or that policy if there are more ballots cast than there were legal voters at the polls?

Crimes against property and person enumerated in the penal code, while they may arouse general protest, are not fundamentally as harmful as prostitution of the ballot. The history of the race may be summed up in the right to the ballot. The right to exercise the ballot carries with it the obligation not to rob another of his right to have full force given to the ballot he may cast. By the determination of those very ballots is the moral sentiment of the community expressed, and that moral sentiment, working through representatives, passes the laws which establish order. When other than moral suasion or argument is used in inducing a man to vote more than once, or once when not entitled to, somebody, somewhere, has been robbed of his rights. Whenever American affairs are subjected to the slightest analysis, it clearly appears that every benefit to be realized depends upon the lawful act of the voter. There is nothing as important to the people as establishing in the public mind that no citizen is a good citizen who does not vote; that no one shall be allowed to vote more than once or under improper inducement; and that a different course entails the loss of the means of self-government.

The writer believes there is no problem

before the American public to-day, whether it be that of monopoly, grinding of the poor by the rich, the robbing of the public treasury, or whatever form the complications of life may assume, that equals, for a moment, the far-reaching and final importance of protecting the method of establishing the public will by an honest ballot. That ballot represents the strife of centuries. It stands for the struggles of the human race for freedom. It is the personification, or should be, of American life. Not only should the casting of the ballot be protected by law, but there should be a recognized standard of moral conduct in the community which will not tolerate the violation of the rights of another by the casting of an unlawful ballot. That standard should be so high on the part of men of all classes that to violate it would bring about immediate condemnation.

It has happened heretofore that party divisions have been such that the actual result from an unlawful multiplication of ballots has not always been apparent. It is frequently found difficult to get convictions of violators of the election laws because juries are not fully impressed with the seriousness of the crime committed by the man who votes more than once. The attitude of the public

on this question must come about entirely apart from law. It must be the result of reason and of morals. It should take but little thought for anyone, to understand that when one personally countenances or condones in another violations of the election laws, he strikes at the foundations of government. The fact that it may not be discovered, or that discovery is difficult, furnishes no palliation. In reforms sought to be imposed, and in the importance of this or that method, the people lose sight of fundamentals, and forget that the end does not justify the means. The spirit of controversy does not give excuse for using instrumentalities that are immoral and which if persisted in would threaten government itself.

There is no demonstration when a man who is only entitled to vote once votes twice. The offense may be known to only a few, perhaps to one or two who are the instigators. Outside of a question of morals, the use of multiplication would demonstrate to the mind of a child that the wrong is both one of kind and one of degree. The writer will be entirely satisfied if his contribution to good government shall be the arousing in the public mind of a keener sense of responsibility for the protection of the ballot. That funda-

mental proposition, as the writer sees it, is that the man who has the right to vote, shall: that the man who has not the right to vote, shall not.

All the proposed reforms that fill the public prints and cause discussion are secondary to this. When the ballot is protected as a man would protect the virtue of his wife or the lives of his children, the ballot will mean something. The man who does not vote should be disfranchised. The man who votes knowingly more than once should be expelled from the community. The man who induces another to vote more than once is upon a plane lower than the illegal voter. With the ballot representing the actual mental and moral desire of a community and the majority of those ballots spelling out that moral and mental desire, no one has cause for complaint who lives under the rule of a majority, and he must accept the result until it is changed. If he does not approve the result he can emigrate. We are progressing backwards if reform does not start on the foundation—the ballot.

THE PUBLIC AND PUBLIC OPINION

X

THE PUBLIC AND PUBLIC OPINION

In dictionary phrase the public is "the people collectively."

To the merchant it is all possible purchasers. To the physician it is all who are ill. To the undertaker it is all who have unsuccessfully employed the physician. To the lawyer it is all who need what he knows. To the political leader it means all who will probably vote on election day.

Public opinion is the aggregate sentiment of the people towards any given topic. Generally when a man declares what public opinion is, he merely describes what he believes the public ought to think on some particular subject. When he goes a step further and insists that the public is demanding something, he in effect constitutes himself the public voice. The tendency to do this marks the politician.

To obtain office or influence, the politician

must be able to anticipate the opinion of the majority. By repeatedly declaring a supposed majority opinion he helps to form it, and the momentum thus established by reiteration frequently produces the result sought. The only qualified representatives of the public are those elected at the polls. They represent it in making, interpreting or enforcing the law, and in following the directions contained in the party platforms. They contribute to public opinion by setting forth the knowledge gained in the performance of their duties.

Sometimes officials are elected without reference to the tenets of any party and are instructed to follow their own judgment. When candidates are elected under these circumstances, the public has not only conferred upon them the right to exercise official authority, but has virtually accepted their opinion as its own.

Any individual expressions as to what it is best for the public to do should be taken only as part of the general contribution of ideas, to be considered and mentally digested in conjunction with all others. The final result should disclose the composite thought indicating the average opinion of the entire population.

In the world of politics practice varies greatly from theory. It may be said with fair approximation that in a national election two-thirds of the voting population is divided between those who are accustomed to act with the republican or democratic parties. The other one-third is comparatively indifferent. Of two-thirds of the membership of each of these parties it may be said with equal truth that they are too indifferent to take an active interest in affairs, and one-third furnishes all the effective activity.

When an election occurs the active third of those composing each party seeks to arouse the interest of the remaining two-thirds; then both parties appeal to the remaining third of the voting population not associated with themselves, and this remaining third usually determines the result. The number engaged in political management is small in proportion to the great number entitled to vote.

With these conditions admitted, it is clearly demonstrable that actual public opinion is difficult to determine and that its real force is seldom made apparent. Of course, in a state as distinguished from a nation, or in a city as distinguished from a state, where the numbers are fewer, local opinion can be

more quickly aroused, crystallized, and made to be more fairly expressed at the polls.

Theoretically, the entire population is always ready to express its own opinion. Practically, it not only is not ready, but has no well-formed opinion to express.

Men apparently feel so much confidence in the ability of our institutions to perpetuate themselves, that they render little or no assistance toward the accomplishment of that desired end. They are satisfied to criticise the men who endeavor, successfully or not, to achieve practical results. They have neither the courage nor the inclination to act, but limit themselves to perturbing comments. They seem not to realize that they are a part of the militant public and proportionately responsible for public opinion.

Political conduct is more strongly affected by example than by precept. It does not require rare genius to frame an aphorism or evolve an epigram that contains sound wisdom, but the force of both epigram and aphorism would be sadly weakened were it discovered that the conduct of the author were not in harmony with the expressed moral. Nothing disturbs public confidence more than to discover that those high in authority who are accustomed to lay down set rules for the

guidance of others do not act in accordance with their own precepts.

Sometimes a very estimable man is elected to public office whose ideas, though highly commendable in themselves, are not in harmony with those of the majority of his constituents because they are not intellectually abreast of him. Such men are never virtually representative, nor can they successfully make their opinion that of their public. The usefulness of these officials is greatly diminished, and equally moral but less intellectual men might advantageously replace them because, being closer to their constituency, they would probably be able to bring about at least a degree of improvement. The superior man, on the other hand, is apt to defeat his own ends by attempting to advance so rapidly that his public cannot follow him. Whatever the proposition under discussion may be, if the person who advances it has neither the art nor the influence to make others desire it, it is too much to expect the law to bring about the proposed change. The majority must be in favor of a law to insure its enforcement. A minority can be compelled to observe it.

If the sign at the crossroads is so high that it cannot be read, the traveler may be

delayed in reaching his destination. If the law keeps too far in advance the people never catch up. Laws are always somewhat in advance of the people, but need not be out of sight.

When a recommendation by an executive does not meet with the approval of a legislature, the difference of opinion assumes the form of a personal contest in the eyes of the public, which immediately takes sides, regardless of the issues involved. If the executive forces the legislature to follow his views, the people applaud him as a victor. If the measure fails, *he* is proclaimed defeated. Months or years may elapse before the public realizes that what it took for a contest of views was merely a conflict of ambitions. It may even learn that each side had invoked public support by interjecting the element of self-imposed martyrdom.

A large part of the public is composed of immigrants who come to us in vast numbers by virtue of a standing invitation, and because they are dissatisfied with conditions in their native land. When they arrive they know little of the conduct of American politics. To them the man in public office is the one charged with final authority, who marks the line beyond which they cannot go. Left

without the association of men who have already profited by being here, who are interested in the elevation of society, and who, to the immigrants, represent the American people, they fail to become imbued with the true spirit of American institutions. When they see pilfering in public office, when they are taught that political favors may be bought with money, when they observe men in the highest walks of life engaged in vituperation, it is not strange that they should fail to make any real contribution to the public welfare. The promptness, however, with which they seek citizenship and learn to participate in public affairs, although not always wisely, should be an inspiration to emulate them rather than a cause for criticism. It is better to endeavor and to err than not to have the courage to attempt.

Generally speaking, the immigrant in his gradual progress toward a point where he merges into American citizenship and helps to make public opinion, seeks the advancement of his children with rarest care. He practices the greatest self-denial in order to educate them and to place them upon a higher plane than he himself occupies, and to insure their becoming active factors in the life of the Republic.

It is while making this progress in development that association with others than those of his own class is of greatest benefit. Fortunately, that these facts are being recognized more thoroughly every day is shown in the work of settlements and societies for the improvement of social conditions. The immigrant is being advanced far more rapidly than in past years.

In the crowded sections of large cities lies the chief danger to the newly arrived, prospective citizen. The second generation of these people, finding itself better circumstanced than the first, more keenly appreciates the benefits redounding from a strict observance of our laws, and this appreciation continually voiced helps mightily to form wholesome public opinion.

On the other hand, long enjoyment of advantages dulls the sense of obligation for them, and when this results in non-participation in the duties of citizenship the effect is indeed deplorable. A man who neglects these duties, morally loses the right to continue to participate in the advantages. At present it may not be possible to deny him his formal rights under the law, but he should be at least denied his claimed right to contribute toward public opinion. He cannot be

prevented from voting, but no one is compelled to waste time conversing with him.

A formal census of public opinion is taken nationally in this country every four years. That opinion is recorded in votes, and no one knows in advance what it is going to be. Presumably it is formed during the time intervening between elections. If those years are advantageously devoted to thought on public affairs, votes are cast intelligently and wisely, and society is benefited. The probabilities are that public opinion has not been rapidly forming between campaigns, and too much thinking is left to the time of campaign excitement. People have a general idea of what is going on, but frequently the real facts from which they could draw conclusions are not within general knowledge. Leading statesmen are so busy in disparaging each other and in enjoying the satisfaction of apparent authority that the public is apt to be overlooked. The result is that, during the heat of political controversy, while the public is continually appealed to for its approval it has not the means of distinguishing between facts and the opinions of the contending leaders, who are often more interested in the prospective pleasure of serving

up the public than they are of having the public well served.

The public has so far successfully reserved to itself the right to think, however imperfectly it may do so. It is attracted by forceful personality; it responds to the magnetic qualities in men; it applauds with spontaneity and emphasis; it is given to hero-worship. Instinctively, however, the public maintains control over its own mental processes and permits no individual long to usurp its exclusive attention. What happens in practice is that men or parties seeking preferment in the conduct of affairs make various plans for the public, and on election day seek approval of themselves, or, to be more accurate, disapproval of their opponents. The public necessarily speaks last, as it speaks through the ballot, and no man, however distinguished, can be assured that the citizens generally will follow his lead for an indefinite period. Often the period of leadership has extended over an appreciable number of years. The ability to suggest new topics, to appear before the public in different lights, to be able accurately to voice the ideas of the many, lengthens the duration of leaderships.

The turning point in the effective leader-

ship of an individual is apt to occur when the force of his own self-appreciation as a leader dulls his judgment and causes him to foist his personal views upon the public, instead of continuing to act as its spokesman. The public may appreciate his views, but does not consider them its own. He then becomes a suppliant for its good will rather than its representative, and finds himself at once one of an increasing number competing for public favor, rather than alone enjoying the favor already obtained.

Many one-time influential men have lost their influence by failing to appreciate that the public is not impersonal. It is just as personal as the individuals whose aggregate form it. The wisest and most effective molders of public opinion are those who maintain at least the appearance of acting with the people, rather than insisting that the people shall act with them because they may have accurately voiced public sentiment in the past. Tact and discretion are qualities quite as valuable as wisdom and forcefulness.

With the increasing population the general public is at a greater distance from the center of affairs, and succeeding years will augment this distance.

The public is easily aroused by scandal and slowly moved by argument. Agitation disturbs its nerves, but agitators are ultimately destroyed by its nerve. The public punishes with tremendous force any infidelity to trust. It also rewards with the intoxication of applause those who may temporarily gain its favor. Irregularly and captiously made charges, not proven to the satisfaction of the public, cause much temporary agitation but result in final contumely for the agitator.

Prominent statesmen and politicians cry "go to the public." The practice is to keep away from it. The men claiming to speak for the public roar about the necessity of taking the public into their confidence. They know better. They know that they only tell the public what they think it is wise for it to know. It may properly be urged that there often are questions, for instance, concerning international matters, where only results can be given. This is true. But it does not excuse the habit of telling the public that it is receiving all the facts when it is not. There is every reason why an executive or a person in any representative capacity should say frankly to the public that he is engaged in working out the details of an in-

tricate problem, and ask that public opinion be held in abeyance. If his reason for withholding the facts is clear, and there is faith in the integrity of his motives, the public can be trusted to postpone its criticism. If the public thinks it has been given all the facts in a controversy it will for a time follow the man who purported to place it in possession of them. The multitude is apt at first blush to accept as true what it is told. Its suspicions are usually awakened when one man competing for its favor shows that another has misrepresented. Crime may be condoned; hypocrisy should never be forgiven.

A man of self-admitted wisdom is never literally frank with the public, because he necessarily believes himself to be so wise that the public could neither understand his reasoning nor the facts upon which he bases it. He therefore states conclusions. If those conclusions are not accepted, he is persuaded of the ignorance of the public. His deduction is erroneous, because what the public really wanted was the pleasure of thinking out the problem with him, and it is not satisfied with having the result patronizingly handed to it as a favor.

There is a great difference between talking

at the public and talking with it. The former is a pastime frequently indulged in by bombastic gentlemen, anxious to impress their hearers with a sense of their own importance. Talking with the public necessitates the willingness to impart to it whatever essential knowledge may be in the possession of the speaker or writer, and to answer all pertinent demands for information on the part of the audience. In order to really talk with the public, the speaker must be in sympathy with its needs, learned from contact with life.

Actually the potential creative public is made up of those men who, participating in public affairs as a matter of duty or even of expediency, seek to act for the benefit of all others as well as for that of themselves, whether the latter is realized in honors, applause, salary, or the satisfaction of a duty performed.

It is the province of the general public, not of one man more than of another, to devise ways and means, for instance, for taking care of the indigent and insane. If this is not done as a matter of humanity, not only the indigent and insane suffer, but the general public also. Fortunately, our institutions furnish opportunities for so many

minds and dispositions, that there will always be some who, either from a sense of civic duty or for personal reasons, or both, will take the lead in these and other kindred matters and by discussion and statute bring about better conditions.

When an immigrant peddler, ignorant maybe of the local ordinances, is arrested for vending his wares in the streets of New York without a license, he considers himself abused and, therefore, is against the government. He has not yet reached a conception of community interest, and does not understand that his license fee helps to provide revenue for the entire city, and that he reaps the benefit of improvements paid for in this way, thus receiving many advantages through the very money he contributes. When his personal habits are interfered with by the enforcement of the laws on health, he views those laws in the light of a nuisance. The fact that all human life is regulated in a measure by conforming to certain rules strikes him at that time as an intrusion upon his personal rights in this "new-found land of liberty." With the multiplication of ideas born of experience and observation, later he frequently accepts as binding upon himself what is generally considered best for the average, and in the

genuineness of his conversion becomes a fierce protestant against anyone else doing what he himself did but a few years before.

This same man becomes confused when he reads in the newspapers that prominent citizens, to whom he instinctively looks up, are charged with interfering with the rights of the public, in their conduct of corporations. He wonders why he was arrested for his first small offense, when they are not. His confidence in the law is impaired. His respect for law and order is only regained when he begins to observe that the majority of men obey the law, and that the practice is to punish the minority who disobey it.

In discussions referring to public opinion it is assumed that all men are thinking about some particular topic at a given time. As a matter of fact, the minds of relatively few are engaged with it. These are in advance of the rest. They have made investigations, arrived at conclusions, and are arguing for their acceptance. The medium between the advanced thinkers and those who have not the opportunity for original investigation is the press. When the press accurately reports the opinions of real leaders of thought it is a public agent of far-reaching importance.

When the newspapers distort the opinions of men given to research and reflection and present them to their readers in garbled form, offering the opinion of an editor as a substitute for facts, they cloud the issue and prevent the public from arriving at wise conclusions. Editors have unusual opportunities to observe a multitude of conditions which pass before them in the performance of their daily duties. It is not possible, however, for their judgment always to be as reliable as that of an individual who gives his time exclusively to the investigation of a particular subject.

To the public the newspaper appears as a lamp of wisdom, with ever-burning and broadly illuminating flame. They do not stop to reason that the views expressed in the editorial columns are those of a single man whose time is necessarily divided between the study of so many topics that his opinion could hardly be final on any one.

If the newspaper does not accurately report the opinions of an individual who is endeavoring to contribute to the public knowledge of facts, it robs the people of the valuable conclusions of another mind, which it is entitled to have for the purpose of assist-

ing in forming its own ideas. This does not eliminate the right of the newspaper to express its own opinions editorially, but when an individual editor makes a statement not predicated upon facts, and allows it to go to the public as if it were, the conclusions of the public will be wrong and its action at the polls will be disappointing, although perhaps not to that particular editor.

This country is especially subject to radical and revolutionary ideas. This tendency is fostered by freedom of speech, freedom of congregation, and freedom of the press. Therefore, the best thought, conduct and influence of conservative, conscientious men is needed to offset pernicious doctrines that might otherwise be adopted as the result of agitation. Because of an entirely local condition, propaganda may be instituted demanding state or national legislation. The people are called upon at once to change their mode of life and traditions. More are drawn into the discussion, and, oblivious of its actual merits, follow this or that side according to the cleverness of the leading advocates of the new idea. The public mind is diverted from the contemplation of fundamental principles to that of abstract theory, and turns from

what has been demonstrated to be of value to that which is entirely experimental.

Action taken at a public meeting is frequently pointed to as indicating public opinion on a particular topic. The protest of an inconsiderable minority is interpreted as the public attitude. The fact is, the general public probably had little to do with the meeting. A few men, sometimes only one or two, hire a hall, distribute handbills, and curiosity fills the meeting-place with an audience. A skillful phrase introduced into a set of resolutions takes the place of an issue. Cleverly expressed denunciation of an evil forms the basis of a protest, and the reading public is apt to rush to the conclusion that back of the meeting there is a condition that justifies an uprising. Stripped of the paraphernalia of agitation, there will frequently be disclosed an individual furthering a personal plan, under the excuse of the demand of the multitude.

The public displays its greatest lack of judgment in the little attention it pays to the selection of representatives. They are the direct product of the primaries, because on election day choice must practically be made between the names on the ballots. Nominations by petition require a greater

outlay of expense and more time than individuals are apparently willing to give to them.

The smaller the political division from which delegates are chosen the greater the opportunity to exercise care in selecting them. Successful candidates really reflect the character of the voters at the primaries more than they do that of the voters on election day.

The fundamentals in political life are few, and do not vary in character from those in any other walk. The power to discriminate between essentials and non-essentials indicates rare wisdom. While the tendency to create mountains out of molehills is regrettable, it is less dangerous than to ignore the molehill and its pernicious maker, while wasting time and energy upon imaginary mountains. Many a case of toothache apparently abates as the dentist's door is approached because the mind has been diverted from the first pain to contemplation of the greater anticipated pain to be caused by the extraction of the tooth. The sufferer imagines he is well and the ministrations of the dentist are dispensed with, while the tooth is allowed to continue in decay. So it is with the public. Instead of fixing its at-

tention upon a recognized defect and eradicating it, with slight pain, it rushes into a discussion of greater possible evils, and dissipates its energy in attacking the Quixotic windmills of supposititious dangers. While thus engaged the lesser but immediate evil, which has been considered too petty to command attention, may assume serious proportions.

Men have died in the enjoyment of poverty while possessed of means ample for comfort. The comparative happiness of others has been turned into discontent by men deliberately seeking to create public unrest that they may be employed to allay it. If there is real cause for discontent, there is also a real remedy. That remedy is the ballot when intelligently cast.

The politician constantly urges the necessity of new laws for old evils. If the public acted with supreme wisdom it would confine the activities of the immoral man within the narrowest possible limits, by general prohibitive statutes. It would then provide, with as few regulations as possible, for the remainder, that they might work out their own individuality. Their walk would then be natural and would not assume the halting step of the man just discharged from prison,

where every motion had been acquired under forced regulation.

The public should not act as if living for this generation alone. If the Fathers had entertained any such belief we would be living under a different form of government. The future cannot take care of itself. The present is the guardian of the future. It is also the test of whether the guardianship of the past was wise.

When men discuss the public or public opinion, they must include themselves. They are responsible for both to the full limit of their capacities. If by chicanery or sophistry they secure the public approval of measures that do not really represent their own convictions but are merely expedient, they have sinned against the public and have contributed toward a condition that may furnish the punishment for their own wrongful acts.

Public opinion controls in the United States when the majority of right-minded men are expressing their sentiments. The size of the majority indicates the strength of the opinion. Often only the minority makes itself heard.

The army, navy, militia, police—combined—could not preserve order in the United

States for one week if public opinion were not in favor of order.

The public can punish without jail and reward without election to office. The closed door of social ostracism can be more terrifying than the locked door of a cell.

American life is a perpetual competition within the limitations of law and morals. When that competition reaches a point threatening either law or morals, the rights of individuals are imperiled.

No man can live his political life alone. No man is a good citizen who fails to recognize his sentimental and legal obligations towards his neighbor and the community in every act. A man's neighbors are not alone those who live on the same block with himself. His real neighbors are those who have the same rights and obligations. The size of the country does not alter the relationship.

American life is a mosaic made up of different surfaces, different colors, different figures.

To live with full consciousness of the political rights of and obligations to others is the best way selfishly to insure one's own rights. To repeat, for emphasis, the greatest American political problem is to cause all the

people to think upon the same subject at the same time. The next in point of importance is to cause them to express their views in the only effective way: at the polls.

When this is done, there is a public opinion worthy of consideration.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION

XI

POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Corruption in politics is not confined exclusively to the improper use of money. Evil may result from practices which, while not literally legal violations, are equally harmful.

In discussions relating to corruption the popular mind turns as a rule to instances of improper inducement offered to legislators, to evasions of the spirit of the law, to the skill of men employed for that purpose, to the employment of money in campaigns, and to practices which are characterized by the well-understood term of "graft."

In a sense, graft is political larceny. It is the taking of money, or the gaining of advantage through the medium of official opportunity. Of necessity it follows that someone charged with responsibility has violated a duty, a trustee has proven faithless. The law-making bodies are particularly susceptible to the charge of corruption, because substantial benefits are frequently conferred by statute.

The public, unorganized and not acquainted with the influences at work, is unable to fully protect itself, and naturally resorts to the cry of attempted fraud, or later, of probable fraud committed.

While there may be in all legislatures a small minority susceptible to corrupt inducement, the influence of those men would be unappreciable if the measures proposed were deprived of party sanction. When a member of the legislature sells his vote, while this fact may not be legally provable, it becomes a matter of general knowledge among men who make it their business to keep track of such conditions. It then is whispered about that someone has been bribed, and from this rumor condemnation is visited unjustly upon many who have been pursuing their duty with honest intention but unconscious that they were instruments of others.

The crime of bribery, notwithstanding the severity of penalties prescribed, results in few convictions, from the difficulty of securing corroboration of a transaction which secretly engages but two men equal in guilt. Knowing what men are corruptible, the professional legislative agent has his duties much simplified and is enabled to regulate the amounts a second time distributed by him,

and frequently quietly retains a substantial percentage of the funds intended for others, reporting to his employers the expenditure of the entire sum appropriated. The one who first yielded to temptation is indirectly punished by his own cupidity, because the determining of his financial value is passed to another.

The time-worn expedient of dropping a roll of bills, apparently accidentally, to be picked up later by clear design by the one for whom the money was intended, has almost become threadbare through frequent use. The expectedly unexpected discovery of money under his pillow when the hard-working legislator seeks restful slumber after a day's work is a less novel than efficient way of preventing proof of crime. The tribute to conscience paid in the intentional loss of a few thousands at a game of poker, where the stakes ordinarily would not be above one hundred dollars, would cause a smile were the subject not so serious. Payment to an inspector not to discover what he has already observed may avoid expense in the lawful construction of a building, and it may also result in the loss of life. The thousand and one instances of petty bribes taken or paid, and the equal number of advantages obtained,

show differences in degree and not in kind. The willingness to give and receive unlawful inducements will continue as long as there are men whose only guide is expediency and whose cleverness makes detection difficult. When a particular instance of bribery occurs there arises at once an imperative demand for a new law to prevent its recurrence. That law is readily passed, and the public reverts to a condition of somnolence, satisfied that an evil has been eradicated. It seems not to occur to the average mind that the evil was an instance of a continuing human tendency. Watchfulness is required as much after the passage of the new law as before. The tendency remains, to reappear again in another form.

Political corruption indicates not alone the high-water mark of crime, but the low-water mark of indolent civic virtue. No matter how vigorous may be the spoken protest against it, if not accompanied by equally vigorous conduct, corrupt practices will continue in increasing measure.

Now and then an individual raises his voice in protest against another individual or a particular condition, and is at once set down as a sorehead, a man with a grievance, or charged with having been kept out of the

combination in which he really sought to be a partner. These comments are often instituted by persons involved, to distract attention from themselves. Sometimes these charges are true; meanwhile the general public continues along its quiet way, unmindful of the real point at issue and the actual cause of discord.

It requires the use of honest money to make audible a protest against the use of dishonest money. It requires great moral courage to institute and maintain just protest against existing wrongs. It may mean the loss of a livelihood. It may mean so great disparagement to the one protesting that he would seem justified in wavering. When one making a charge against another before the public fails to prove it, either from a lack of opportunity or courage, the sympathy of the public is apt to go toward the one accused. Later-made charges against the same person are discounted, and immunity is thus gained from public condemnation. This fact is so well known and appreciated by those engaged in unlawful pursuits that they frequently seek the appearance of martyrdom as a cloak for their conduct, which could be covered in no other way.

The idea that the public in the first instance

regulates improper conditions is erroneous. The public does no such thing. It listens to individuals. Those individuals appeal to it for votes by methods consistent with their own moral ideas, and what the public finally does is to exercise its right of veto against an individual or a plan for which its approval is sought. Whatever idea may be involved in proposed measures theoretically for the benefit of all, the initiative primarily comes from individuals or groups seeking the sanction of the voting majority. The public has submitted to it on election day always two, and sometimes more, propositions. It really votes down all but one. That one is adopted, not necessarily from approval, but because it seems the least objectionable. And the same thought is pertinent to candidates. The successful one need not lay the flattering unction to his soul that his personality has necessarily met with full approval. The fact may be the public has disapproved of his opponent. These remarks are pertinent in this place because of the means taken and the money necessarily expended in a campaign to find out what the public position is to be. If men who inveigh against the money corruption of politics condone it by their own inactivity and seek to shirk their

moral responsibility by refusing to employ their weapon of offense and defense, the ballot, corruption will continue as long as there are citizens in the United States. It smacks of childishness to indulge in tears and wailings. It is the part of manhood to protest by opposing effort. The utterances of many public men resemble the sobs of childhood in their power to remedy political evil.

The use of money in campaigns has increased with years, and will continue to increase. The legitimate expenses of political contests are a mark of their intensity, and frequently are traceable to the indifference of citizens who can only be aroused to the importance of an issue by having fireworks employed to attract their attention, and the music of bands to hold it.

Perfectly legitimate expenses of national campaigns exceed the administrative expenses of some of the smaller states, and would not suffer in comparison with the total debt of the colonies at the close of the Revolution. Statutes regulating the expenses of candidates and restricting the uses for which money may be employed tend to lessen the wrongful use of money. They can never eliminate it, and the argument for a particular proposed law, that its passage will

prevent these abuses, serves to demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the real causes of the abuses themselves. If in addition to forfeiture of office by a candidate for corrupt practices on his behalf, a constituency could be deprived of representation during the term of that particular office, there would be more practical results. The evil to the state in the direct purchase of votes has already been alluded to. The continuation of that practice will be observed as long as honest men are willing to accept office through purchased votes. Corruption in high places can never be reached and eradicated, and the halls of legislation never be purified, unless the evil is traced to its original source—election day. The public mind is more often aroused by scandal in official life than by prosaic statements and figures demonstrating corruption at the polls, or any argument for or against the wisdom of a particular administration. It is easier to arouse opposition upon the discovery that the keeper of a house of prostitution has bribed a policeman than by showing that the tax rate has been raised a full point.

So far as the law is concerned, there would seem to be sufficiently drastic penalties to prevent the corruption of voters. Unfortu-

nately that is not the fact. It is difficult in the extreme to obtain convictions for violations of the election laws. It will continue to be difficult until men, apart from moral principles, employ their common sense in concluding that an unlawful vote has robbed them of a lawful right. Self-protection should prove an effective argument. It is not upon the same plane as a moral consideration. Practically it may furnish the same results.

Compared with bribery, graft is petty larceny. The opportunities for advantage through the favors of an administration mark the standards of those charged with the responsibility. Most instances of official corruption are due to the unwillingness of citizens to insist upon their rights and to incur the trouble necessary for the exposure of efforts made to secure money through their own timidity.

The weaker usually yields to the stronger, and men ignorant of their rights are frequently imposed upon. When a man with knowledge of his rights permits himself to be imposed upon by another who seeks to use unlawful methods, he participates in those methods and is accountable for them morally as much as the one who makes the

improper proposition to him. The influence of men in public office is so tremendous in creating a proper atmosphere, from which may be gained a correct idea of the purpose and enforcement of the laws, that no matter how wise may be statutory provisions, if those who are to carry them into effect are not intelligently chosen the laws are largely nullified. As years pass there will be less and less opportunity for men of limited means to successfully hope for political preferment, and the public is liable to be served by those who use official position as an ornament for which they can afford to pay, or as an instrument to bring about their greater financial advantage.

The only successful opponent of a dishonest dollar is an honest man. It may come to be that the only successful opponent of a dishonest man is an honest dollar, honestly expended. The measure of political corruption is the measure of the actual difference between the intellectual and moral average of the public in practice and what it is in theory.

Whatever topics pertaining to political life may be under discussion, whatever may be the title of any chapter, whatever may be the line of exhortation mentally, it leads to

the same result, and that is represented by individuals meeting or not meeting their civic duties and obligations.

It is not the intention of these pages to catalogue political crimes, or to enter into competitive denunciation of them. Anyone of ordinary intelligence and observation who reads the papers has substantial information of instances of corruption, breaches of trust, and violations of the duties of public life.

The most corroding corruption in politics is not money-taking, but is the practice of hypocrisy.

The public treasury is carefully guarded and amounts taken from it are relatively insignificant. Even the sum of which the public is robbed through official or legislative assistance, while substantial in volume, of itself is not so serious in effect as the violation of rights supposed to be assured to every citizen under the Constitution.

Financial panics, it is admitted, are the result of a lack of confidence. Political panics likewise are the result of a lack of confidence due to increasing belief in the failure of the law to protect individual rights. This lack of confidence is aroused when wrongs, secretly perpetrated, come to general notice.

Most violations occur through undue confidence placed in individuals. That confidence is founded upon a belief in the integrity of the individual and approval of his declared self-sacrifice for the welfare of the people whose favor he seeks for himself. In order to impress the crowd it is not necessary to be a hypocrite. The permanent harm results when it is later discovered that personal ambition was the guiding motive. Thereafter the public becomes suspicious of those who are honestly seeking to improve conditions. Men of genuine worth, modest in temperament, are put aside, and suspicion takes the place of confidence, insincerity becomes a general charge. With that lack of confidence ensues a lessening of the sense of responsibility and a general scramble for selfish advantage takes the place of devotion to public interests.

In appealing to the public "beauties of declamation are too frequently contrived to conceal poverty of argument." With lack of detailed information the public, which must express its approval by votes, is led astray by frenzied speech and tirades by one man against another. Issues merge into personalities, and the people become confused as to the merits of a proposed reform, being

forced to decide in practice, not whether there shall be a reform, but who shall execute it. Men of moderate intelligence, conscious of their limited range of influence, confine themselves to selecting a champion to whom for the time is delegated their own right of initiative. When self-selected molders of public opinion insist exclusively on the adoption of their method of procedure and by tempting phrase engross public attention, the opportunity of the charlatan arises; professions then are taken as facts and theory takes the place of practice.

It has been aptly said, " we force luminous periods and splendid passages by the heat of imagination, and are consequently more ambitious to be admired than understood, to be quoted for manner rather than to be useful for matter."

It takes real courage for the burglar to rob, because he knows that his life is in jeopardy, and that the man who kills him will be commended instead of condemned. When a person of social standing in a community, so jealous of his own position and the esteem of his neighbors that he would not commit knowingly an overt wrongful act, hires another to do it, he should receive disapproval for both. The amount stolen or the privi-

lege purchased is inconsiderable compared with the loss to the general public in the confidence previously reposed in him.

Conscience is a safe guide for conduct, but declared standards of personal consecration need not be accepted as conscience for another. When men by self-contemplation become so convinced of the strength of their own opinions as to demand that those opinions shall be the convictions of others, their practical usefulness is on the decline. Charged untruth does not necessarily prove a man a liar. The one who charges may have changed his mind. Political corruption is not covered by reference to the stealing of money or the gaining of special privilege. The public is corrupted when it is imposed upon by a false or fictitious argument deliberately presented with the object of subsequent individual preferment. Rectitude of motive is not established by charging its opposite. To rob the public with one hand and bestow gratuity upon it with the other always leaves the giver with a balance in his favor. Men are rarely morally ambidexterous. To preach honesty and not practice it, to deceive the public by sententious reasoning, to profess virtue and not live it, are the real essence of corruption in politics. To feign is-

sues, to force agitation, to contribute form instead of substance, may evidence intellectual force and capacity, but result in no contribution to the public weal.

When the cry of " stop, thief " is raised it is sometimes wiser to watch the man who makes the outcry than to follow the crowd. Moral inconsistency in politics is more serious than statutory crime. A lie told to the public is worse than a lie told to an individual, politically, by the test of numbers. A harsh bargain enforced by the strict wording of a contract may be justified in law; in ethics it may be execrable. In politics, when the excuse of law is given for individual benefit and the public has been deceived in the passage of the law, even the court may be called upon to sustain it and substantiate the rights claimed thereunder. The public has, nevertheless, been corrupted and robbed as clearly as if deprived of property by physical force. The crime is the greater because the public in the aggregate, without leaders in opposition, is always at disadvantage. The public may affect but cannot control conditions between elections. The public can punish, but cannot always prevent.

Men who are in a position to attract the attention of the public and to assist in mold-

ing its thought through the influence of example have the responsibility of trustees.

During recent years there has been a marked awakening, and men in high places previously immune from even vigorous comment have been proved guilty of secret violations of law. It is alleged in their defense that they did not appreciate that the practices indulged in were violations. It was said in addition that certain acts were of such general commission as to be justified in practice. There may be some warrant in stating that because one has not been prosecuted for a number of years while continuing in a certain line of conduct, he was justified in believing he had public approval. This begs the question. He knew, or did not know, whether the particular act was in violation of law and morals.

Unrestricted criticism of individuals and corporate management, carried to extremes defeats its own purpose. How many critics are there who in the same position as those whom they criticise would have refrained from taking advantage of practices which give great opportunities secretly for financial advantage at the expense of the public? Men can put themselves to sleep morally, through the opiate of advantage, as well as they can

close their eyes in slumber by the use of a drug. It happens, however, that many citizens charged with these unlawful practices occupy stations of such intellectual and social prominence that they cannot plead ignorance for their acts. They may justly resent the intensity of comments made upon them; they may charge selfish motives to their critics, but the fact remains that while claiming prominence in the social, moral and commercial life of the community, they failed to live up to the standards professed by themselves and demanded by them of others. When these men are discovered, despite their own ingenuity and cleverness, to have been taking secret advantage of the public, that very public has been robbed of more than the money they have gained. It has been robbed not only of the money unlawfully obtained, but also of the confidence which it had a right to repose in those who insisted on the position of intellectual and moral leaders. The public has, therefore, been corrupted, and the chief corruption is the lowering of ideals and its loss of confidence in those to whom it was entitled to look for standards.

Men who claim social precedence cannot expect to maintain that position and at the same time enjoy without comment the fruits

obtained under cover of that reputation by reprehensible means. Pride and illegal profit do not mix. Precept and practice must be in accord. Men must choose between reputation and stolen goods. They cannot consistently expect to retain both.

Most large fortunes have resulted in the development and management of corporations. These corporations receive the right of existence through privileges conferred by the public through its representatives in legislative bodies. Rights granted under charters must be given more than a literal interpretation. Theoretically, the public knew exactly what it was doing when the franchises were bestowed. Practically, those franchises were the product of astute minds, seeking all they could obtain through the lack of sufficient discernment on the part of legislators. The persons seeking these advantages, when using them for financial profit and justifying their conduct legally, forget that they are a part of the granting public. It is true that the country has received its greatest financial development through the commercial enterprise of individuals willing to stake their fortunes and sacrifice their efforts on these very means of progress. If all were unwilling to take the initiative, the

public would be deprived of many of the causes of its greatest enjoyment and profit. It follows politically that there must be read into every contract between individuals and the general public an interpretation for mutual benefit. When the individuals who took the chance originally, dulled in conscience by the profligacy of profit, fail to recognize the moral understanding running with their legal opportunity, they have no just excuse for being distressed by general comment.

When fortunes are amassed by the aid of ingeniously interpreted rights of contract, and accumulations have been gained beyond the demands of avarice, men turn their backs upon their own procedure and condemn in others what they did themselves.

Faith in the effectiveness of law is lost when it is observed that the fortunes of others have been gained by using it as a means of oppression and to furnish unfair opportunities in competition. That lack of confidence confirmed in the public mind renders less stable the law itself. That lack of stability jeopardizes the enforcement of contracts, so that in the end the original dereliction may be the cause for its own punishment.

Responsibility works downward, not up-

ward. The resentment following deception is unreasoning and sometimes ruthless. Legislation aimed at particular individuals may cause a community to suffer. Hypocrisy is worse even than admitted selfishness. To fight an equal in an unjust cause may justify the valor of a contestant. To rob the public by deception made possible through the inability of large bodies of men to protect themselves against the well-organized efforts of individuals is worse than dishonest; it is cowardly

Prosecutions for crime, diligently conducted, and the publicity incident thereto, accomplish much and are a substantial deterrent to the repetition of similar crimes by others. Human ingenuity and resourcefulness do not always follow the well-broken track of criminal precedent, but seek new avenues. When the public is used through the ballot, directly or indirectly, as a means of seeking improper individual advantage, with its consequent harm to that same public, the stability of the government is impaired and nominally free institutions fail to furnish the protection apparently guaranteed by them. If for no other higher reason than sheer selfishness, the public should not be deceived or its instruments for order corrupted.

The results may not be immediate, and in the multitude of concurring circumstances may not even be apparent. The ultimate bad effect is as unavoidable as the tide.

The State can protect itself against declared enemies, the public can meet an open attack, a community can purge itself of visible wrongdoing, but political corruption, working under the hypocritical guise of the beneficiary stalking about with virtue on its lips, deception in its heart and iniquity in its practice, is an insidious enemy most difficult to guard against. The threatening political crime of the century is not larceny, but is hypocrisy.

POLITICAL HONESTY

XII

POLITICAL HONESTY

Between "Thou shalt not steal" and "Honesty is the best policy" lies the history of unindicted men.

The dollar will always be vigorously pursued, whether the standard be gold, or the ratio be sixteen to one.

Money stands for necessities and luxuries, and the means employed to obtain it are a clear index to the principles of him who seeks it.

Principles are declared in definition, but evidenced in conduct.

The argument for honesty has been established through centuries of discussion, and need not be repeated here. There is no prevailing discussion in behalf of dishonesty. The argument for honesty may, therefore, be considered established. Where there is sufficient mentality to appreciate an abstract proposition, we can assume that either the Divine command or the human instinct to-

ward expediency is generally accepted. The difficulty lies in the application of the principle to concrete acts.

Stealing money is the least disputable form of dishonesty, and in effect may be less dangerous than a thousand other acts not involving the question of theft.

Political honesty does not differ from any other kind. Political dishonesty is emphasized because of its far-reaching effect, due to the fact that the one who practices it is always in a representative capacity. Men who would scorn to steal a dollar willingly profit by deception, which cannot be characterized as theft. Mental honesty is oftentimes more important than financial integrity.

Intent is a necessary element of crime. It is proven by the acts leading up to the crime itself. The intent in mental dishonesty, a moral crime, is frequently impossible of proof because the only evidence that can be adduced is the statement of the perpetrator as to his own condition of mind.

The instant a man takes public office, in the intendment of the law he becomes impersonal and has no right to think or act except for the public. It is his duty to advise the public, in mental honesty, whether it redounds to his personal popularity or not. It is his further

duty, in equal sincerity, never to advise the public to pursue a course of conduct in order to gain personal popularity. It may be the popular mind at the time may not have so comprehensive or far-reaching a grasp of the situation as he has. The opportunities afforded him by investigation and thoughtful study, may force upon him opinions not then generally entertained.

If he varies his course so as to float with the current contrary to his innermost convictions he is dishonest, because he has robbed the public of the knowledge of those convictions it is entitled to have. If he fails to be literally frank in giving expression to his real beliefs, he has broken his contract with the people and violated his oath as well.

If he advocates measures in order to create popularity for himself and uses that popularity as the reason for further preferment, he is again dishonest and his services to the public are fictitious rather than real.

Intellectual resourcefulness may enable an official to give a reason for action to the public that proves apparently satisfactory and still is not the real one. The dishonesty in this is greater because there is no way to prove it. If, in addition to doing any one of

these things, which it is plain he should not do, he charges others with insincerity of motive or improper conduct, he adds hypocrisy to his dishonesty and he becomes a positive detriment to good government.

It is possible for men in public life, conscious of their own mentality and confident in their integrity, to persuade themselves that their views, because theirs, should be accepted as final by people generally. This is a form of mental dishonesty for which there is no cure. To propose a public policy with the real thought in mind that its acceptance will add to the preferment and praise of the advocate is nothing more or less than a fraud upon the public, which has a right to assume that the proposed plan was entirely ingenuous. The dishonesty arises from the withholding of the real but unadmitted reason for self-advancement. The reward would come just as clearly, consistently, honestly and surely from the public, if the latter understood the underlying motive.

It is strangely anomalous that the more consistent the man of influence considers himself, the more satisfied he is that men who differ from him are not unwise, but unmoral. The public suffers from this because unable to analyze the ulterior motives of men who

stand before it, apparently acting only in its behalf, and yet actuated by the same intent for self-preferment which they condemn in others living in the more humble strata of life.

It is, of course, dishonest, politically and otherwise, for men to be elected to legislatures or Congress for the purpose of representing and protecting interests. It is infinitely more dishonest, mentally and morally, while doing this to disclaim their real purpose. The public can protect itself against the one and is impotent against the other.

Platitudes on honesty, not directed toward individuals and specific acts, are as useless to the Ship of State as is the wind to a vessel with unset sails. Ignorant honesty and intellectual dishonesty go side by side in political parade. They make an attractive picture, but fight little for public welfare. Why a man will be honest with an individual and dishonest with a multitude, mentally or financially, is as yet an unanswered question. To accept graciously the designation of "a leading citizen," carries the indication of a desire to lead and an admission of endeavor to furnish an example worthy of being followed. When such leadership has inherent the mental dishonesty of secret personal purpose, it

is more baneful than admitted selfish wrongful design.

The knowledge of wrong-doing, without effort to prevent its continuance, is mental dishonesty. Virtue which can only be expressed in words has no other value than ornateness of language. Honesty which can only be proven by the words of the one claiming it, is without civic worth.

The possession of mental faculties is not the sole characteristic which divides the animal kingdom into the possessors of long and short ears. It is better to bray and kick, and to kick vigorously without mentality, than to possess mentality without the courage even to make a noise. Men who are mentally dishonest would steal if they had the courage. It is not what financially honest and mentally dishonest men do that is most harmful to the State, but the fact that their spoken word does not represent their real convictions. Their visible conduct is mere disguise. It attracts the eye. It has no permanent value. It will not withstand the acid test.

A FINAL REFLECTION

XIII

A FINAL REFLECTION

It is time for the American people to take themselves into their own confidence.

We are old enough as a nation to put off the bombastic clothes of childhood and act with maturity, not only toward the outside world, but among ourselves.

The exhilaration following the Revolution naturally resulted in a rhetorical output describing not only the greatness of our institutions, but our inherent greatness because we happen to be Americans.

The country has developed materially until the prophecies of imagination have been more than realized. The possibilities of individual betterment here have drawn millions from the four quarters of the globe. There is practically a new and entirely different social life from that following the foundation of the government. Our laws have gone through a process of evolution showing changes almost kaleidoscopic as a result of commercial de-

velopment and territorial expansion. Fundamentals, however, remain the same.

There is a wide difference between human instincts and habits. Habits are affected by climate and geographical conditions, but instincts remain practically the same. It is time to realize that a man is not necessarily better because he is an American, although the pride that he may become better because of American institutions is fully justified. While it cannot be said without effrontery that all the fundamental principles of human life have been worked out and established with fair clearness, it is certainly true that they are better appreciated and understood than ever before in the history of the race. The constant problem will always be to apply these fundamental principles of human association under the form of government, to the incessant creation of new conditions.

We are passing through a period of comment and criticism. It does not require brilliancy of intellect to discover that neither the race nor the American people is prepared for the Millennium. If the final moment of development had been reached, it would have been Providentially announced ere this.

Any writer on political affairs is supposed to close his discussion of existing evils with

a remedy for their betterment. That suggested remedy usually takes the form politically, of a proposed law. There is no law at this time which can change what seems most to be criticised in public and private political life unless it is preceded by a changed attitude of mind. There must first be a consciousness not only of a condition to be remedied, but of a feeling of responsibility on the part of each citizen that *compels* him to contribute toward the result.

Any discussion of political principles and criticism of present conditions is usually summed up in a chapter on individual responsibility. This is logical and proper. However, a citizen who is unable to understand without argument from another that he bears an individual responsibility is incapable of grasping how he should exercise that particular sense of duty.

The discussion is practically closed as to the fundamental political rights of men. The doctrines of democracy and self-government are established practically beyond dispute. This does not mean that our particular form of government is the only one under which men can successfully live. It is apparent, however, from the most casual glance at the affairs of nations as now constituted

that more freedom is being given to individuals, and that there is a growing diminution of centralized authority.

With the academic discussion of forms of government and an increasing appreciation of the duty of man toward man, the theory of Divine right must of itself be weakened in practice. It is a good time in this country now, in the general tendency toward betterment, to put aside high-sounding aphorisms and to study, a little at least, prosaic human nature.

While the country is large enough for anyone to hide himself among its vast numbers, he cannot even when alone, if he reflects, divorce himself from the idea that he is an inherent and important factor in our system. The American Eagle may seem to us the most considerable bird in existence. That is a point of view. Other emblems may mean as much to other peoples. Since the Civil War public discourses have described the weaknesses of other nations in comparison with ourselves. To-day the leaders in public opinion in this country are treating the world to the edifying spectacle of a discussion of how bad we are ourselves.

As a nation we are not as bad as we declare ourselves to be. Individual reputations

are being talked up by talking down others. Men seem possessed by a passion to establish their own individual virtue as if they had been charged with its absence, and their line of argument is to point to another and prove that that other is without any redeeming qualities whatever, and therefore they must have what virtue may be left.

The public is referred to in general phrase, while men lack the courage to express their own opinions and hide behind what they declare is the public thought, when the public has not expressed itself until after the happening of an event. The public is prayed for and preyed upon at the same time. The fervency of the prayer is supposed to indicate the clerical garb of the civic preacher. We talk about democracy and the fundamental rights of man with the glibness of a parrot instructed to repeat a memorized phrase. At the same time the public furnishes sustenance, willingly or unwillingly, to the very individual who proclaims himself as its sustainer and lasting friend.

We decry officialdom in other countries and bow before it at home with the sycophancy of a trained courtier. Men unknown through public service or participation in political duties, thrust into the responsibili-

ties of office through changing circumstance, find themselves the objects of adulation and applause, sought with outstretched hands for favors that they may dispense. The same man with his term of office expired is passed by with no other recognition than the nod of common politeness.

We harp on individual rights and *forget individual obligations.* All this does not mean that the country is receding either in morality or intelligence. It is intended here to mean that in the increase in population, the multitude of citizens, the vastness of resources, the only voices that are heard in the conversation of a community are those of individuals prominent by merit or accident who are seeking the favor of the general public and making claim to serve it and represent it.

The false assumption is spread abroad that differences between the social strata of life mean differences in instinct and motive, in desire and ambition. The fact is that desire and ambition are increased and intensified by material and social development, and therefore the responsibility is greater. " The people " are referred to impersonally and to accentuate discourse, as if speakers and writers were not a part of that same body.

The man who centers his life upon accumulation has as engrossing a passion for money when his capital is only one hundred dollars as when it is one hundred millions of dollars. When he has acquired an amount so large that his physical and mental efforts to acquire more have been exhausted and he is unable to do anything but reflect and articulate, his remaining days are passed, as a rule, in laying down rules of conduct for others who may be starting out on a career the same as the one closing upon him.

In political official life there seems to be an apparent necessity for establishing wisdom and virtue, for lecturing those who have been less successful in the accomplishment of their particular line of ambition.

Criticism in this country is both an art and a science. Publicity furnishes an exhilaration and mental expansion which seem to preclude an appreciation of normal conditions, and the preacher of the doctrine of democracy indulges in the practice of mental exclusiveness.

Of all systems of government that of the United States is most political. Equality before the law only means that everyone starts legally equal. The perpetual insistence upon individual rights has developed

into a chorus so loud that the cry for individual obligation is not heard.

Every opportunity to make money, to gain culture, to acquire knowledge, to enjoy luxuries, is a political question here, for the reason that the mode and method necessary to experience these things come through laws, the result of action at the polls and the wise or unwise use of the ballot. To kneel in prayer is about the only activity in this country not affected by statute law, and the reason for that is that it is assumed in the Constitution.

For the purpose of acquiring any accurate knowledge of present conditions and to affect any permanency from statutory provisions it must be taken for granted that temporal questions are finally settled politically, but that they need not be considered as party questions. This has been touched on in previous pages and need not be repeated here.

In the history of the world we have had an ice age, a stone age, an iron age, and other divisions in physical evolution. The present age seems to be one dedicated to the practice of concealing one's real individual opinions and of expressing opinions as a finality for everyone else.

Can it be that because men are living in

the twentieth century they are less moved by human instincts than a century ago? Have men no longer the moral courage to be natural and normal? Is it possible that personal virtue cannot stand upon its own legs without knocking out from under another the feet which enable him to stand erect?

It is not necessary for the purpose of this volume to go into detail as to existing conditions which are the chief subject of criticism. Before the cause for those criticisms can be removed, however, and they are almost entirely political, it is only necessary to recognize a few fundamental propositions.

Men like power, influence, applause, publicity, money, personal precedence. They always have, they always will, they always should. It is born within them. The manner of their acquirement, the method of their use, and the obligations recognized toward others, form the standards by which men must actually be judged.

If it is honorable to serve the country in time of war, it is equally necessary and honorable to serve it in time of peace. Admitting this, why criticise the man who desires public office? That desire should be applauded and not condemned. The method

of acquiring that office and the manner of its administration should be observed and made the subject of adverse comment when necessary, and proper applause when justified.

It certainly is laudable to desire to be President of the United States when a man believes that he is qualified in motive and capacity to meet the obligations of that great office. It is equally honorable for a man to seek the humblest appointment within the gift of that same President, and he has as much right in law and morals to satisfy his instinctive ambition in his lowly walk of life as has the man born to, or who may have reached a higher level in the social scale. It may be annoying to a President or Governor to have his time imposed upon and his tranquillity disturbed by his inferiors, but certainly they have a Heavenly Father in common and a Federal Constitution which declares their common rights. Why, therefore, hide behind the cloak of hypocrisy and endeavor to differentiate? The member of a President's cabinet is ordered to go out before the people and instruct them politically and endeavor to induce them to follow this or that line of political conduct. The departmental clerk is ordered not to, and when he participates in the political activities of a

smaller circle, notwithstanding their common rights before God and man, he is dismissed from public service as if guilty of some foul crime.

It is true that some men are more gifted than others, and some better qualified than their neighbors for public preferment and authority. Is that any reason why they should not strive to better themselves? The test is honesty of motive and belief in an ability to perform an official duty.

Publicity discloses to a community the capacities of a man, and enables him to broaden his acquaintance, to be more useful to himself and to those who are dependent upon him. Is there anything abnormal in his having a selfish desire to better himself *if* while in the public service he gives full value in the performance of duties intelligently carried out?

Co-operation among men brings results impossible through individual effort; hence parties, hence cohesive strength, hence rewards on account of co-operative effort in behalf of a common political principle. When those rewards are held out as the price for so-called regularity, when it is a matter of common observation that political preferment depends oftentimes upon the ability of

an applicant to carry the satchel of a political leader rather than travel with a trunk full of ideas of use to somebody, the argumentative nonsense of political regularity in that particular instance causes animals other than human to bray only because they cannot laugh.

It is not necessary to go through life with a perpetual grin which will result in a permanent appearance of idiocy, any more than it is to assume a frown in the hope that it will grow into a wrinkle indicative of profound thought. It is better to be smiled with than laughed at. A hypocrite can force tears without detection. Honest laughter cannot be feigned. If men before the public did not conduct themselves with a reasonable degree of seriousness it would be assumed that they were not serious-minded enough for the proper conduct of affairs. When, however, they act behind a forced seriousness, an abnormal dignity and the constant strain of an endeavor to create an impression without the moral courage to be natural, they so mix up their personality with political questions that any normal solution of a problem is difficult of accomplishment.

American life is not a principle: it is a procedure. It is a procedure involving not

only rights but obligations. The time has come when rights are pretty clearly defined and admitted. There will always be the difficulty of securing them when they are in conflict with the rights of somebody else. It is an opportune moment to take a respite from the discussion of rights to the discussion of obligations. If there is one obligation imposed upon an American citizen more than another, it is to be frank, manly, honest, open, generous, and without reserve in thought and act toward every other citizen.

The proportion of men in the United States who are generally known is pathetically small compared with the entire number. The country is judged by those who have forced their way to the fore. The great body of citizens is unknown to the average observer, and will be less known as numbers increase. It is not a question of individual responsibility, as those two words are ordinarily defined. Responsibility cannot be divided in this country mathematically. No man has done his duty when he has only performed his mathematical proportion. His full duty is done when he has done all he can.

This is a country of example. The man who demands to be followed, the man who insists on his rights to serve the people, the

man who has the temerity to speak for a community, is the man who must combine precept and example. When his conduct is colored by hypocrisy he is a common enemy. When a man insists upon being a social leader his conduct must justify it. He is not required to insist upon being a social leader, but if he does, he must justify it. A man is not required to be a political leader, but when he insists that he is, the people have a right to assume that he is mentally and morally honest. When an admitted social leader is found to be corrupt, he has exercised a privilege but violated a duty. He has placed himself where he must take the fruits of one or the other, and cannot claim both.

There seems to be no public discussion which is not colored at some point by reference to the acquiring, management, and transmission of private fortunes. This is not to be wondered at. Why discuss it, however, as if it were a discovery?

To look into a mirror may be indicative of vanity, and if practiced too often may result in vanity. To look into the same glass to discover whether one's face is soiled so that the soil may be removed with a view to being more presentable to others in the ordinary

associations of life is commendable. In neither case does it hurt the glass. It is about time for some of our distinguished citizens to sit before the mirror for a while. It would not do the American people at this time any harm, in the general mix-up, to get before a national mirror and look at themselves.

It may seem to be a startling innovation to pen a volume on the subject of politics, necessarily referring to things which are and ought not to be, without prescribing a remedy. There is a certain degree of egotism in asserting that a particular method of procedure will right a wrong. There is effrontery in insisting that only that particular method will right a particular wrong. Men become so exhausted in describing evils that they are sometimes out of breath when they endeavor to tell how they may be remedied. It is possible to exert oneself so fully to win a race that when across the line the contestant may not have strength enough to receive the prize.

There is only one prescription that the writer would offer the American people at this time, and that is to stop long enough to catch breath, reflect and look at themselves in the mirror of their own absolute con-

sciences, instead of the reflected light of what they claim they are.

Let it not be forgotten that in this country men are given the legal freedom to commit crime, if they are willing to take the chance of bearing the punishment of imprisonment. Men who are known to have, and who do not claim not to have a lack of moral principle, can be guarded against. They differentiate themselves, and they are satisfied with the rewards that come from their particular line of activities. They are not guilty of deception in the first instance. They are not hypocrites. The man who seeks individual advantage to the detriment of the public, without claiming he is not doing so, is not a phenomenon peculiar to political life any more than physical disease is to the body. These men can be taken care of by the remedy of indictment and conviction.

This volume concludes with the proposition with which it started: that the corroding evil in American political life is hypocrisy, and not larceny. *That* hypocrisy finds its inception as much in ordinary, plain, vulgar vanity and mental selfishness as it does in any other inducing cause.

A reasonable sense of humor is a Providential dispensation. If men who have

lost their sense of perspective to such a degree that they become hypocrites by practice as well as by instinct were now and then laughed at, as well as maligned, it would have a tendency to reduce their false pride and selfishness to a more normal level.

"If the devil ever laughs, it must be at hypocrites; they are the greatest dupes he has; they serve him better than any others, and receive no wages; nay, what is still more extraordinary, they submit to greater mortification to go to hell than the sincerest Christian to go to heaven."